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S E R M O N S
P R I N C I P A L L Y
A D D R E S S E D t o Y O U T H.
T O W H I C H I S A D D E D,
A T R A N S L A T I O N
O F
I S O C R A T E S ' s O R A T I O N t o D E M O N I C U S .

B Y J . T O U L M I N , A . M .

*Dii probos mores docili Juventa,
Dii senectuti placidae quietem,*

— date —

Horace.

Τα τέκνα υμῶν τῆς ἐν χρύσῳ παιδείας με-
ταλαμβάνετωσαν : μαθεύωσαν τιταπεινοφροσύνῃ
παρὰ Θεοῦ ἰσχυεῖ : τι ἀγάπη ἀγνὴ παρὰ τοῦ
Θεοῦ δύναται : πῶς ὁ φόβος αὐτοῦ καλὸς καὶ
μεγας, καὶ σώζων πάντας τοὺς ἐν αὐτῷ ὀπίως
ἀναστρέφομενους ἐν καθάρᾳ διαγωγῇ.

Clementis Epist. ad Corinthios.

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ERRATA.

Page 32, line 4. from the bottom, for *coldness* read *coolness*. p. 36. l. 4. for *ledness* r. *lewdness*.---l. 20. for *parents* r. *parent*. p. 54. l. 6. for *zeal* r. *real*. last l. delete *through*. p. 66. l. 5. for *aparent* r. *apparent*. p. 67. l. 3. for *his* r. *this*. p. 68. l. 13. for *the* r. *our*; for *of* r. *on*.---l. 18. for *deport* r. *déportment*. p. 86. l. 1, 2. for *the removal of youth teaches by an untimely death*, r. for *the removal of youth by an untimely death teaches*. p. 94. l. 8. for *notaries* r. *votaries*. In the title of Sermon V. for *worship* r. *trust*. p. 97. l. 2. from the bottom, for *surely* r. *sweetly*. p. 101. l. 3. for *endeavouring* r. *endearing*. p. 117. l. 9. for *to be* r. *as*. p. 136. for *gracious* r. *great*. p. 141. l. 22. for *worlds* r. *world*.---The Oration, p. 14. l. 9. after *sympathy* r. *with*. p. 16. l. 8. for *resort* r. *retort*.



To the Rising Generation :

PARTICULARLY,

TO the Youth who attend his Ministry, (with an immediate View to whose Benefit they are published.)

These Discourses, as a Token of his warm concern for their best interest,

Are,
with requesting,
a serious and
candid perusal,
humbly dedicated

TAUNTON, by their
Jan. 22, 1770. affectionate Friend,

The Author.

To the Rising Generation

PARTICULARLY

To the Youth who stand for the
right (with an immediate view to
whole humanity are concerned)
These Discourses as a Token
his warm concern for their best in-
terest

And

with confidence

a future and

capable of

human freedom

Published by

The Author

The Author

C O N T E N T S.

S E R M O N I.

Youth exhorted to seek the favour of God
and Man.

LUKE ii. 52.

*And JESUS increased in Wisdom and Sta-
ture, and in Favour with GOD and Man.*

PAGE 3.

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The Prodigal; a Warning to Youth.

LUKE xv. 12---19.

*And the Younger of them said to his Father,
"Father, give me the portion of Goods
that falleth to me." And he divided unto
them his Living. And not many days af-
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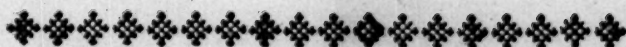
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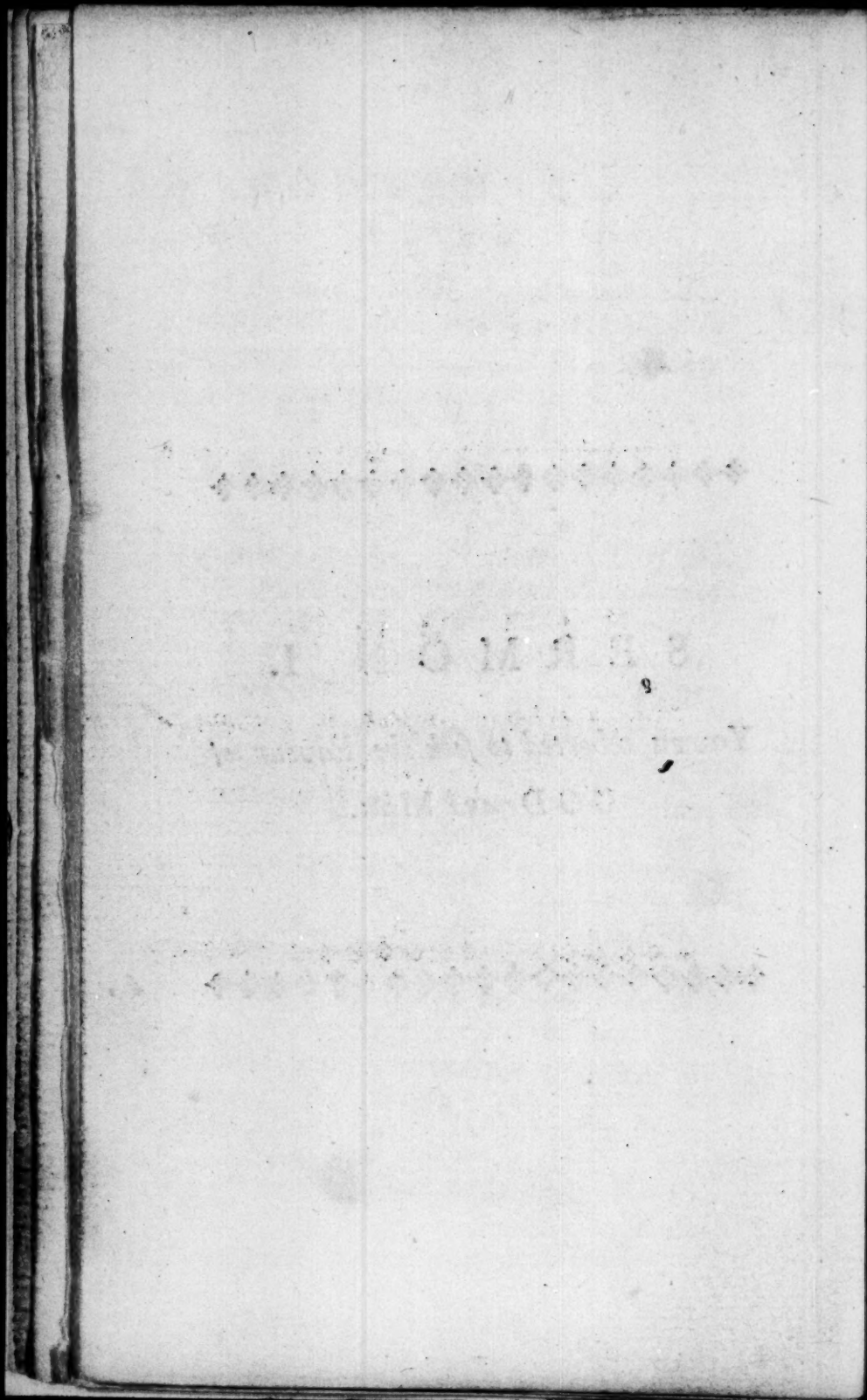
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S E R -



S E R M O N I.

YOUTH exhorted to seek the Favour of
G O D and M A N.





LUKE Ch. ii. 52.

*And JESUS increased in wisdom and stature,
and in favour with GOD and Man.*

IT is the use of History, whether sacred or profane, not only to lead us back into the transactions of past ages : but also to hold forth such a faithful picture of men and manners ; as may at once instruct, warn and admonish us. Here we see wisdom and folly realized ; the mind is alarmed with the misery and shame this man fell into ; and it feels the animating attractive force of that man's goodness and bliss. The springs of the human heart are laid open, and we see the progress and operation of those causes ; which exalt or degrade man. But whatever advantage can result from the study of History ; the Sacred History bids fair to pro-

duce them all. And for its bulk, it furnishes out a larger variety of extraordinary events, signal characters, and great examples; than are to be met with in any other. The consideration of its divine authority, and its connection with the scheme of Revelation set aside; *this* should recommend it to our regard. Amongst the names preserved here, that of JESUS CHRIST, separate from his extraordinary character and mission, is most distinguished. And the point of view, in which our text exhibits him, is not the least remarkable and instructive circumstance that relates to his life and character. "*And JESUS increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with GOD and man.*" This is recorded of our divine master, to intimate that by this early attention to the pursuit of wisdom, he laid the foundation of that noble superstructure of amiable, excellent, and perfect virtue: which afterwards so illustriously adorned his life, and has made the memory of his name so precious and honourable down to the present age;---and to intimate: that hereby mankind were prejudiced in his favour, and led to form, engaging, and worthy conceptions of his character; and were prepared to attend with great candor and patience to him

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him; when he opened the nature of his office, and the benevolent purposes he was sent into the world to execute. And this excellent character of the young JESUS, has a powerful tendency to strike the minds of children and youth, with esteem and delight, and to fire their breasts with emulation. Oh! that this day may see so happy an effect produced by it! I will now make it the subject of my present serious and free address to you, my young hearers; being ambitious of forming your minds, under GOD, to the resemblance of CHRIST; and of fixing your hearts in the early love of the deity, and the pursuit of wisdom. You will, my dear friends, be serious and candid. May that gracious Being, who smiles on every period of life, and who has formed our hearts susceptible of every moral impression, fix your attention; and write on your minds in lasting characters, the instructions of this day!---Whilst I would endeavour to kindle in your bosoms, a desire to obtain the favour of GOD and man: and would earnestly recommend the pursuit of wisdom, as the only means to secure it. “*And JESUS increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with GOD and man.*”

First, Let it be observed from the words, that *the love and pursuit of wisdom* is the most likely and effectual method to secure the divine approbation and the esteem of man : not mere knowledge, much less subtlety and cunning in managing secular affairs, is meant by wisdom in the scriptures. An understanding to discern between good and bad ; an understanding to know how to appear and behave in life, with dignity, virtue, and usefulness, is wisdom, in the stile of the sacred books. This is at once the most beneficial and important science. Its beginning is with the fear of GOD, and to depart from evil, is understanding. Religion, genuine Religion, yielding the fruits of righteousness, is wisdom. Its rules are the best maxims ; its happiness, the worthiest object of our aim. This wisdom is clothed with the truest charms ; and to the pursuit of it, the best advantages are annexed. You have a just, as well as a fine and animated description of them in the third chapter of the Book of Proverbs ; which let me recommend to your serious and frequent perusal. Would you be determined by the sentiments and example of others, none can be more decisive and forcible, than that of
the

the young JESUS. In this wisdom He advanced, as he grew in stature: as he ripened in years, his mind unfolded itself; the faculties of his soul were strengthened, and improved by a progress in religious knowledge, and by more enlarged views. The Historian relates an instance of our LORD's love of wisdom, and of his proficiency in it: when he was but twelve years of age, he was found sitting among the Jewish doctors, hearing them, and asking them questions; and all were astonished at his understanding and answers.---Such a tender youth, diligent to cultivate his reasoning powers, and extend his views by a growing acquaintance with the most important subjects, could not but be acceptable to the GOD of wisdom, who has made his intelligent creatures wiser than the beasts of the field: so inquisitive a disposition could not but secure the love and esteem of man.---But it was not this alone that secured to the young JESUS, the favour of GOD and man; it was *the effect* of this knowledge in forming his temper and behaviour: it was the amiable and excellent influence of his knowledge, cherishing every pious kind and humane affection; which endeared him to others,

and rendered him the object of the divine love. The account of what our SAVIOUR said and did before he entered on the stage of public life, is very brief; yet, in it, brief as it is, we are able to trace out his piety, modesty, and virtue. His answer to his mother in the temple, was an indication of the exalted notions he entertained of his station; and of an ardent, as well as early bent of soul, to fulfill the will of GOD. "*Wist you not that I must be about my father's business?*" The account we have of his being subject to his parents, not only shows his filial obedience and submission; but more beautifully illustrates his humility, and the entire subjection of his own desires to the will of GOD. As he neither took occasion from his superior wisdom, nor extraordinary designation, to set himself above the parental authority; though his parents were persons of a mean and illiterate station: nor elated with the prospect of the high and sacred character he was to be invested with, did he rush forward with the impetuosity and vanity, natural to his early years, into his public ministry and life; but modestly and contentedly waited, till the time appointed by GOD, for his appearance openly, arrived. These things

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things put together, point out what were the signal qualities, and the attractive virtues, which adorned and ennobled the earliest years of our master's life; which won the affection of man, and drew on him the approbation of GOD. Let your minds dwell on this fair model! view the young JESUS, or imagine you see him under a strong and lively sense of the beauty, excellency, and reasonableness of religious virtue; and from the influence of a comprehensive acquaintance with its nature, obligations and branches, discharging with regularity, constancy and chearfulness, all its duties. See his mind opening, and his understanding advancing to a state of maturity and vigor; almost before the intelligent principle begins to display itself in others. See with what veneration and awe towards the Great GOD, his soul was filled; with what love and gratitude *his* bosom glowed. See him by the daily exercises of devotion, kindling in his bosom every pious affection; and with the fervor of religion, adoring, praising, and supplicating his heavenly father. Behold him receiving with meekness and delight, the instructions of his parents; active to do their will, and hastening to execute the unfinished command

command, whilst the words were yet on their lips. See him adorned in his conversation with the native charms of purity, innocence and modesty, affable and meek, humble, courteous, and kind to all. See these lovely virtues adding an amiableness, a beauty and grace, to his whole deportment and character. Does not this faint, this imperfect delineation of his moral temper, raise some agreeable emotions in our bosoms? Does it not beget our esteem, and awaken our emulation? I hope it does; I pray it may! Let me propose this example to you my young friends. Think on the worth and beauty of this character. Think how amiable you would appear, was it your own! Think, whether it can not become your own. Try to make it so. To this purpose give a meek and honest attention to the following hints and admonitions.

I would charge, I would entreat you to study religion, its natural obligations, and the enforcements it has received from Christianity. Study the nature, perfections and works of GOD: study the principles, truths, and precepts of the gospel: study its evidences and grounds: study your own temper, dispositions, and powers: know what you are, and what you are made for

for. No one is made for himself; let none venture to live to himself. If we are by providence fixed in the *lower* stations; our masters and superiors have a claim to our industry, faithfulness, and honesty: hereby we shall not only maintain ourselves; but benefit them, and benefit the public. If we move in *higher* ranks, our servants, dependents and labourers, have a claim to our equity, protection, and kindness. In every situation, something is due from us to our family, to our friends, and to those, with whom we are more nearly connected. Something is due to the neighbourhood, and civil or political community we are allied to: something is due from us to the world, and to the Christian church. Every talent and opportunity for doing good to either we enjoy, is a trust reposed in us; and for which we are accountable before the tribunal of the universal parent and governor. Do not I beseech you then? do not make it the principal object of your wishes; how you may pass through life with the most ease, elegance, and pleasure; or how you may get most money; but how you may do the most good, how you may pass through life in your respective stations, most virtuously and usefully. Study to live
to

to GOD, and to live to man : let this be your aim ; let nothing be regarded above, or like to this. This is wisdom. And let every particular precept and maxim of wisdom, have its proper place and weight.---- Reverence, obey and love GOD. The greatest are not independent of the supreme Being ; and the youngest have lived long enough to taste the goodness of the parent and friend of all. Devoutly worship him day by day. Take not his name in vain. Dare not pollute your lips with the profane oath.---Behave with dutiful submission, with affection and respect to your parents and superiors.---Be lowly minded ; let modesty and humility give a lustre, grace and ornament to your whole deportment.---Be bold to speak the truth, dare not tell a lie. ---Attain to a dignity of mind, cultivate a relish for the manly exercises of reflection and wise discourse.---Be sober, be chaste. Be not among wine-bibbers, or among riotous eaters of flesh. Shun, by all means, shun the path of the strange woman : for a whore is a deep ditch, and her steps take hold of hell. Shun every approach of such evil : avoid every incentive that would lead you to violate the laws of purity. *Abstain from all fleshly*
lusts

lusts, which war against the soul.---Guide all your affairs with discretion, and discretion will preserve you.---And lastly, *be pitiful; be courteous.* Let the dumb animals feel your mercies : let all, who know you, taste your benevolence : let your charity be as extensive, as the Universe. Cherish the most tender, friendly, humane sentiments for all : rejoice with them, who do rejoice ; weep with them, who weep : banish, for ever banish from your hearts all the seeds of the malignant passions, anger, malice, envy and revenge. Be merciful, be meek, be of a forgiving disposition. Love peace ; follow the things which make for peace, and as much as possible, live in peace with all men. In a word, above all things put on charity : let it have its extensive, its generous, its warm, its delightful influence over all your affections and passions. Let this be the spring of your social conduct. Let me persuade you to esteem and practice these lessons of wisdom. This is the way to the favour of GOD, and the esteem of man : which reminds me that in the

Second place, I am to open this motive to the early pursuit of wisdom ; and to try to awaken in your bosoms, a desire to gain
the

the love of man, and the approbation of the deity.

I. This pursuit of wisdom and practice of virtue, will *secure to us the love and esteem of man*. Piety and goodness have charms to sooth the savage breast: they strike, they delight them, who in their own practice, are abandoned to iniquity, and command their approbation. They address all the feelings of humane nature. Conscience, the moral sense, gratitude, love and shame; all these affections and principles are on the side of virtue; and plead its cause with every man. But when piety and goodness direct the choice and conduct of youth; they shine with peculiar lustre, and wear peculiar graces. They are agreeable to the natural modesty, tenderness, curiosity, and flexibility of childhood and youth. They add a dignity, sedateness and wisdom to an age, most exposed to giddiness, folly, and amusement. They prevent any bad principles and affections from taking root: or if any should have gained admission, hereby they are easily checked, and soon cut off. And they afford such pleasing delightful prospects, that the young persons actuated by them, will grow up to usefulness and honour in life: early piety and goodness
are

are attended with such advantages ; that the subjects of their power become amiable in the eyes of all.---Let this then induce you, my friends, to revere love, and practice them. Your tender minds cannot be indifferent to the love of others. The heart with youthful vigor warm, pants for glory, honour and praise. Ambition, and a thirst for superiority, and victory is one of the first passions which discovers itself. How do children contend for the triumph with their toys and plays ! With what joy does the heart beat ; what pleasure sits in the countenance of the youth, who is come off victor in a task ; or who, by a particular action, has secured the plaudit of his parent or tutor. As we advance in life, nobler views present themselves ; more worthy and excellent methods of superiority, fire our youthful emulation. Let us thirst for the glory arising from a progress in virtue, and continual improvement in wisdom and holiness. Let me inspire you with an ambition for that esteem, to which virtue gives the surest, firmest title ; a title, its enemies cannot dispute. And what can afford you so good a prospect of comfort and success in future life, as the approbation and love of your fellow-creatures.

You

You are entering on a stage of action, in which you will meet many difficulties to be encountered with ; many obstacles to be surmounted ; in which there is great danger of making a false step ; and to go through which, with credit, usefulness and innocence, you stand in need of the advice of those who have gone before you. Secure the favour of men by the practice of religious virtue, you will gain them for your friends. You may indulge the expectation of their advice, council and assistance : they will feel a generous pleasure in doing every kind office for you : they will wish to see you do well in the world, and they will contribute their utmost to it. Your interest then calls on you to pursue religious wisdom, and obey its dictates : and permit me to recommend and urge it from a strong desire of seeing you happy. I pray GOD your hearts may be fixed for religion and virtue ! But there is a nobler motive behind. For

2. This is the way to the favour of GOD. It is certain, there is a GOD ; a Being of all holiness, purity and perfection. It is no less certain ; that He approves holiness, and delights in the righteous. Must not excellency, beauty and perfection be acceptable

acceptable to the source of all ? Can a Being, who is infinitely good, be indifferent to goodness ; wherever he discerns it ? Goodness, the most amiable, and excellent thing in all the world, must attract his love : and, when it is exhibited with peculiar lustre ; when the circumstances attending the practice of it, reflect additional worth and beauty on it, his esteem for it will grow higher. This recommends to the divine regard, the goodness of the young. The commands of GOD's word, to " remember our Creator in the days of our youth, and to flee youthful lusts," are a testimony from himself of his peculiar esteem for pious youth. The encomiums bestowed on them in the scriptures, are encouraging monuments of the same truth. What signal favours, what extraordinary honours attended JESUS CHRIST : when his early ripened into the exalted wisdom, and benevolent actions of his manly years and public life ! When Solomon at his first entrance on the scene of empire and government, and warm with youthful vigour, made wisdom his choice and prayer : GOD not only gave him wisdom in a superior measure, but super-added the grant of wealth and honour to an eminent degree, with the promise

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mise of long life on the condition of his obedience. * This shows that in the judgment of the great GOD, we can not make a more worthy and amiable choice, than that of wisdom. You here see, with what high esteem and applause from GOD, his prayer was attended ; and how generous and ample are the tokens of the divine favour.---Is not this a most animating consideration to engage you to early piety and goodness ? what consideration can be more important ? The approbation of GOD is the highest pitch and utmost perfection of all glory ? The worth of glory and honour must rise in proportion to the wisdom and dignity of the person, by whom it is conferred. Among ourselves, is not the good opinion of the worthiest and wisest most coveted ? what glory, and dignity, and honour, must then result from the approbation of the Supreme Being ? the all-perfect and unerring Judge ? which must as much exceed their's, as divine perfections exceed human infirmities.---Glorious in itself : it is equally beneficial in its consequences. When GOD is your friend : and heaven smiles upon you : in that you will enjoy all the springs of comfort,
all

* See 1 Kings, Ch. iii.

all the sources of safety and bliss. This will secure you the protection of his power, the guidance of his wisdom, and the supplies of his goodness. Whatever is for our true benefit in such a case, we shall obtain : and it is no less a consoling, and gladdening thought ; whatever would really hurt us, though we, through our ignorance might be apt to desire it, shall be withheld from us. What need we fear, when GOD is for us ? How can the prospect of the future scenes of life dismay us, when we know that the Almighty is with us ? Can we not with cheerfulness, calmness and joy, look forward to and anticipate the various vicissitudes of this stage of action, we are entering upon ; under the conviction that the Supreme Being is on our side, and has a high regard for us ? Oh ! my friends, nothing can afford the comfort ; that this consideration will yield us. Put this in competition with all the gaieties, follies, and pleasures of youth : they will not only vanish in the view ; but the thought of giving a loose to them, will be rejected with abhorrence.---And if we carry our thoughts forward to the last awful period of things ; what tongue can describe : what imagination can conceive the inexpressible, the

transcendently glorious honours, that will crown the head of the pious youth; and of the saint, whose virtuous, holy life has begun and kept pace with his rational life? With what joy and exultation, with what extacy and satisfaction will the breast overflow; when our plaudit shall be pronounced by the voice of GOD: and when the host of heaven shall catch the sound, and the encomium shall be resounded through the whole assembled world? Can the ambition of either men or angels, rise higher than this? Let not our ambition take up with any thing short of this. I trust your souls are too noble and generous to rest contented without the applause of GOD! Let me propose this honour to your choice: and refuse it if you can, with the approbation of your reason. To your *reason* I appeal. I leave the matter *there*.

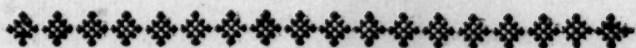
To draw to a close. The road to honour and happiness has been pointed out to you. You have heard, how important it is to pursue religious wisdom. Do not hesitate in the affair. What reason is there for delay and doubt? Keep your eyes on that perfect model of the dispositions, views and recompence of wisdom, JESUS CHRIST our once dying, but now exalted friend.

He

He came into our world to teach us the truest wisdom : his gospel contains the best rules of wisdom : and the best motives to engage our choice of it. And in his life, all the principles of a devout, virtuous and useful conduct, were exemplified to the greatest perfection and beauty. It was the encomium of his earliest years ; that he increased in wisdom and stature ; and in favour with GOD and man. Follow this pattern of wisdom : and deserve the same encomium. What will insure to you greater happiness ? Will youthful lusts, will the lawless dominion of youthful passions ? No ! far from it ! they will certainly bring on you disease and misery, shame and death ! Will wicked associates and loose company, (I can not mention them without earnestly exhorting you to shun them) will they lead you to higher honour and greater glory ? It can not be ! Dread, remorse and ruin will be their portion and promotion for ever.--- Will you, can you be easy, as long as you defer to begin a course ; which will be crowned with the esteem and love of man ; and what is infinitely greater with the favour of GOD ? Believe me, I most earnestly and sincerely wish your happiness. Could I, dare I direct you to any thing

else besides piety, goodness and wisdom : I would willingly do it. But I am certain these divine endowments are the only method of rising to reputation and comfort here, and to eternal happiness hereafter. Do not be so blind to your own interest, as to neglect this friendly advice. Immediately devote yourselves to GOD and wisdom. Let me be so happy, as to see this endeavour to enlist you in the best pursuit, and to fire you with the noblest views, successful. I pray GOD ! he may make you so wise and happy. Amen!

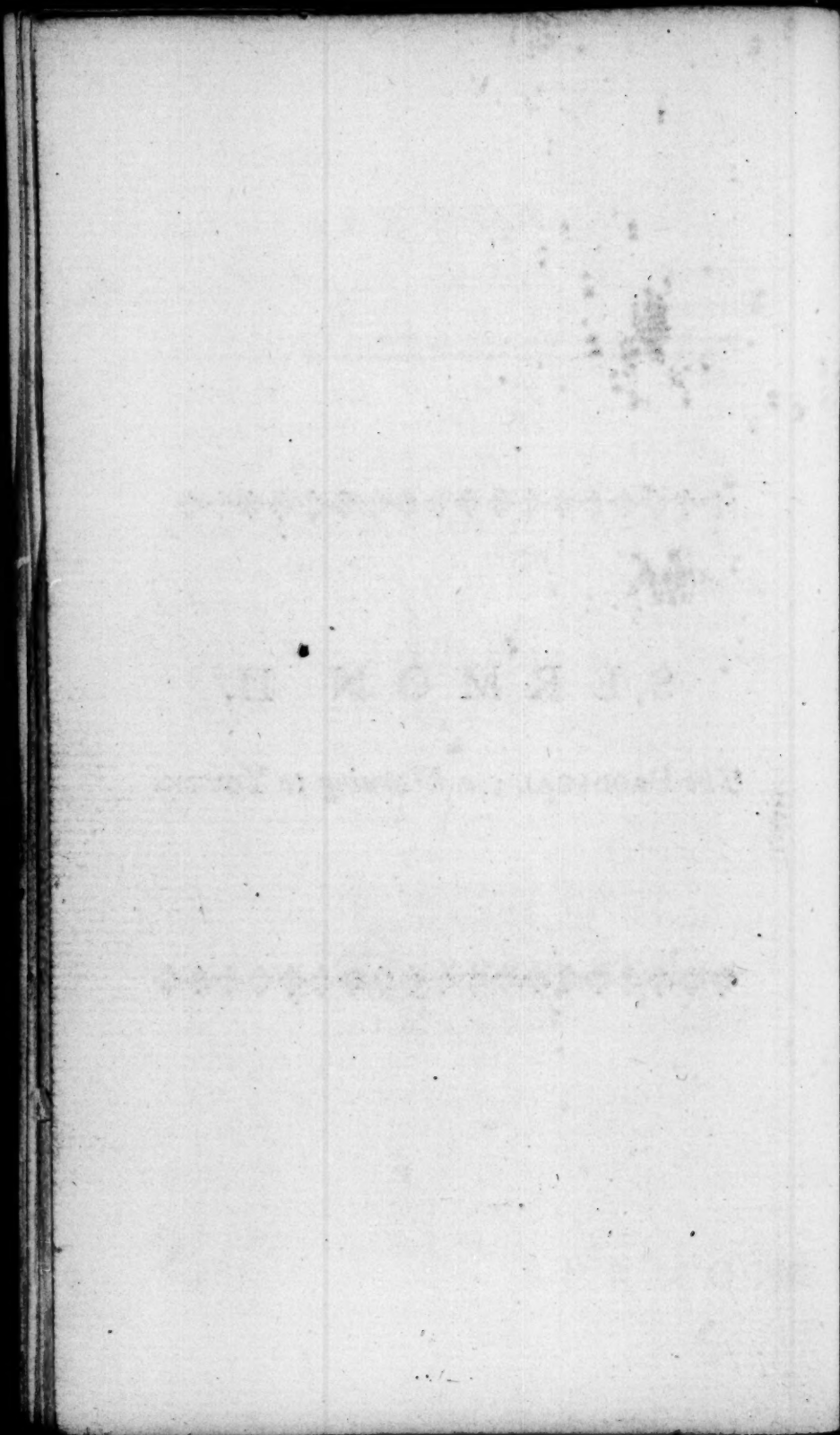




S E R M O N II.

The PRODIGAL ; *a Warning to* YOUTH.





LUKE Ch. xv. 12—19.

*And the younger of them said to his father,
“ Father, give me the portion of goods that
falleth to me.” And he divided unto them
his living. And not many days after, his
younger son gathered all together, and took
his journey into a far country, and there
wasted his substance in riotous living. And
when he had spent all, there arose a mighty
famine in that land; and he began to be in
want. And he went and joined himself to
a citizen of that country; and he sent him
into his fields to feed swine. And he would
fain have filled his belly with the husks the
swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.
And when he came to himself, he said,
“ How many hired servants of my father’s
“ have bread enough and to spare; and I
“ perish with hunger? I will arise and
“ go to my father, and will say unto him:
“ Father, I have sinned against heaven
“ and before thee, and am no more worthy to
“ be*

“ *be called thy son : make me as one of thy
“ hired servants.*”

TH E unconquerable meekness and steady composure of his mind, are most amiable and striking parts of our SAVIOUR's character : and are exemplified almost in every occurrence of his life ; the evangelical Historians record. Though all the labours and schemes of his philanthropy met with the worst returns ; malice, and ill-will could invent : though he is a constant witness to the inhumanity, censoriousness, and superstition of the Scribes and Pharisees ; dispositions, which being so opposite to his own, would strongly affect one of his sensibility and goodness : though he is daily treated with scorn, violence and reviling : yet he is still the same ; always serene, calm and benevolent. The parable of which my text is a part, is one instance among many of the invincible gentleness of his temper. The Scribes and Pharisees expressed great resentment at his conversing with Publicans and Sinners ; though he did it with a generous view to their reformation and improvement. To convince and sooth them, he composes *the PARABLE of the PRODIGAL* ; which was excellently

excellently adapted by its whole texture, and by a variety of tender strokes to vindicate his own conduct, and to affect their hearts. By the *Prodigal*, he represents the miserable state, and sincere repentance of the Publicans and Sinners: the behaviour of the forgiving compassionate and kind Father, is a picture of the sympathy and generous, affectionate benevolence of his own Ministry: under the image of *the elder son*, he describes the censorious, severe and unrelenting spirit of the Scribes and Pharisees. Thus with admirable prudence and address, he insensibly leads them to approve his conduct. For the story would almost force them by the propriety of the characters, and its striking resemblance to present circumstances, to discern its design; and to make the suitable application of it to justify CHRIST, and to correct their own dispositions and views: while they felt their compassion moved with the distresses and grief of the penitent Prodigal; their disgust excited by the ill-nature of the elder son; and their minds pleased, and charmed with the kindness of the good father.— With this, the original and great design of the parable, many other lessons of piety and virtue are connected; and several useful pictures

tures of human life and manners are exhibited. Amongst the rest, there is a lively, striking one of the follies and vices of youth. It holds forth in an affecting manner the consequences of youthful debaucheries ; and represents the distress and anguish, which will attend our recovery to peace and happiness, after an indulgence to folly and vice. A concern for the virtue and welfare of youth engages us now to consider this part of the parable. In the prodigal, Sirs ! behold the young man void of understanding. Oh ! that I could paint his conduct in those colours ; that I could describe it in that language, as would pierce and persuade every youthful heart ! But would my young friends give the subject their serious and deliberate attention ; it would make sufficient amends for my defects ; and by the blessing of GOD, would render them wise, good and happy. Attend then to the subject ! And may GOD succeed my endeavours and your attention. Amen !——We will begin

First. With observing and tracing out *the common cause and source* of youthful folly, vice and debaucheries. We may learn it from the character and conduct of the prodigal. “ *A certain father had two sons :*
and

and the younger said unto him, " Father, " give me the portion of goods that falleth to me." And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance in riotous living."-----

To be independent, master of his fortune, and free from the controul of parental authority, was the object of his ambition. He thought it a reasonable request to be put in possession of that part of the paternal inheritance which fell to his lot : but it proceeded from the foolishness of his heart. That he had no just cause for disgust and resentment, at the exercise of parental power, is clear from the condescension and tenderness display'd by the good old man, through every circumstance. The father appears in the same mild, engaging light, in his attention to this giddy youth's suit ; in the encouragement and reception afforded him when penitent ; and in his conduct to the elder brother.---Did this young man intend to increase and improve his fortune by merchandize and trade : why then does he not lay his plan before his parent, and submit it to his wisdom ? Why is he so eager and precipitate ? Or if not skilful in improving,

improving, is he discreet and prudent in expending his fortune? Yes! his wisdom instructs him in the arts of riotous living: his prudence was display'd in the methods of wasting and consuming his substance amidst scenes of debauchery and vice. He was set on gaining the possession of his fortune: that point obtained, his next business was with all speed to fly from his father's notice: and to reside at a distance; where no admonitions of aged wisdom, no injunctions of parental authority could reach his ear: and where his father's eye could not shame and check his criminal pursuits. Tired with filial submission, charmed with the gay and delightful scenes of pleasure and joy, his imagination painted before him, not suspecting that his schemes could deceive him, or that his wealth could be exhausted, he wants to commence his own master; and to be exempted from every thing, which would interfere with the desires of his heart. This was the folly and the first step towards the ruin of this thoughtless young man.-- This is the folly and the first step to the ruin of many, many a youth, like him abandoned to the gay, pleasing and intoxicating ideas of a giddy brain. To those, who are
bewitched

bewitched with this folly ; who are impatient to be at their own disposal, and spurn at the instructions and commands of a parent, I would address myself : You ! aspire Sirs ! to be independent and free, masters of your fortune and time. You think your age exempts you from the controul of authority, and the severe councils of tasteless old age : and you judge it proper, that you should be allowed to pursue your own inclinations without any remonstrance and restraint. But why so warm, so eager in a compliance with your imaginations and thoughts ? Why should you shun, and with disdain reject the solicitations and advice of a kind and good friend ! Say, are you certain that the path, you would take, is right and safe ? May not they, who have travelled the road of life for a course of years ; who are acquainted with the various intricate turnings, bye-ways, and dangerous paths, be more capable judges than you ? May not they, who have seen the deception, mistakes and ruin of numbers, that began life with them ; who have learnt judgment from experience, long and approved experience, may not they be better qualified to conduct you to the plain, the right and the safest path ? Is not some difference due to
years,

years, experience and practice? How can you form a proper judgment of the propriety and reasonableness of your own schemes and pursuits, young and untried, as you are in the ways of the world, without the council and advice of others: whose riper judgments; whose observations confirmed by many repeated facts; whose affectionate tenderness would be esteemed in the opinion of all cool and considerate persons, sufficient pleas for an attention to their remonstrances and direction? who are most likely to be deceived, you or your parents and friends? you, who are young and inexperienced: or they, who are advanced in life and knowledge. You, whose views are confined, and whose understanding is only opening: or they, whose acquaintance with the world is large, and whose judgment, through a course of years has been arriving to greater perfection. You, who are determined by the warmth and vigour of your passions and imaginations: or they, who view things with the calmness of age, with the sedateness of experience, and the coolness of wisdom. Can you therefore be at a loss to determine which is most prudent and safe, a respect for, and in most cases a submission to parental authority,

thority, goodness and wisdom : or to follow the bent of your own inclinations and desires ? Again, I may appeal to the inward feelings of your hearts to discern, which is most decent and amiable. For one moment, forget your own schemes, and look abroad in the world. *Here* behold, a young man modest, sober and discreet, sensible of his youth, sensible of his inexperience, diffident of his understanding, afraid of being misled, suspicious of his own schemes ; but hearkening to, and weighing the admonitions of parental wisdom and goodness.--- *There*, see an obstinate youth warmed with the vigour of his years, flushed with the imaginary scenes of a life, devoted without restraint to the pursuit of pleasure ; hence he receives the injunctions of mildness with a sullen countenance and inward resentment : he can scarce refrain the smile of contempt, and congratulates himself, when he finds, he has escaped from the councils of the parent and friend. Consider the conduct of these youths : I know, which you will praise and commend ; which you will say is most amiable and becoming. Only be the young man, you commend.--- Once more, let me lead you again to the

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inmost

inmost recesses of your own heart: search your bosom; look within. Why do you dislike, why do you wish to avoid the commands and maxims of parental wisdom and goodness? Is not this, the reason: say, have I not discovered the true cause? Let your conscience speak: you know, you are sensible; that your schemes, pursuits and courses cannot stand before aged wisdom: nor bear the scrutiny of a parents eye: you know the way of life you are engaged in, or would follow, is wrong; absolutely wrong: shameful and destructive: therefore you choose not to be check'd in your inclinations, or disturbed in your pursuits? This aggravates your folly, and will hasten your ruin. The Prodigal was thus foolish: and was thus ruined.—Proceed we to observe

Secondly---From this story, the *nature, folly and consequences of youthful debaucheries and a sinful course.* While he was engaged in the gay pursuit, and knew no care but to fill up the hours with delight and joy: whilst the continued succession of new scenes of riot and debauchery left no time to reflect, and less inclination to examine the state of his affairs, a different scene overtakes him. Having withdrawn from
his

his father, and gratified himself without restraint, he soon falls into shame, distress and poverty. His wealth is spent in riotous living. A famine in the land aggravates his private distresses. He is reduced to pinching, want and slavery. The companions of his expences and pleasures forsake him. He hires himself to feed swine : and envies them the husks they eat.---This distressing situation of the Prodigal, is only a picture of what are in general, the natural consequences of a heart governed by the same principles, and of a life spent after the same manner. And this is the next important lesson, the character in the text is suited to convey to the feelings of every young mind.---Mark, my friends, the misery and woe, which attends the person lost to modest diffidence, and to filial affection and reverence. He shakes off the submission and duty of a son. He flies from the inspection of a good and venerable parent : for to know, that the kind old man saw him, would shake his wicked purposes, and fill his inmost soul with horror and shame. He becomes the slave of his passion, and yields to every command of appetite. He pursues whatever is gay, expensive, noisy and riotous. To send round the intoxicating

cating bowl, to study the arts of intemperance and riot, to equal and surpass others in extravagance and debauchery, in the acts of gallantry and lechery; to riot with drunkards, rakes and harlots: to destroy modest innocence, to play high, to make life all dissipation, noise and vice, to laugh at religion and virtue, to treat futurity as a fable.---This is the employment and ambition of the Prodigal. These scenes are acted over, pursued and repeated without thought and care; till the health is impaired, his substance wasted: and no resources are left for pleasure, or even for bread. Lost to all inclination, and capacity for honest labour, he cannot work: forsaken by the companions of his debaucheries, no possibility of redress and assistance is to be expected from them: having ungratefully forsook his parents and his friends, he is ashamed to seek that succour from them, which by the basest conduct he had forfeited. He is plunged into adversity a stranger to the habits of prudence and application; a stranger to the vigour and manly resolution of an innocent mind: a stranger to inward peace and serenity; sinking under the contempt of his former friends, and the loss of the esteem and regard

gard of the sober and worthy; sinking under the anguish and remorse of his own mind, and under the prospect of that dark, dark scene, his former life, his present condition, and futurity presented to his view.

---Who can bear the foresight of adversity, brought on by a very criminal behaviour, and heightened by a concurrence of piercing and overwhelming incidents? Yet this is the end of the sons of debauchery, extravagance and riot. Gracious GOD! into what misery and woe, do thy creatures hurry themselves, breaking through all the ties of reason, conscience, duty and prudence. And, my dear hearers, will you after having been called to behold this affecting scene, after having been admonished and alarmed, will you take any measures, productive of such misery and woe. If you are impatient of the inspection and authority of a parents eye; if you stifle the remonstrances of reason, gratitude and interest: if without reflection you are engaged only in the gay, expensive schemes of pleasure, diversion and riot: this misery, this adversity will in some measure, in *proportion* to your folly, and guilt be *your's*. Oh! How the thought pierces every heart, that wishes you well? What a deep groan

does it now force from the parental bosom ! with pity, with concern will every countenance behold you ! at the distant prospect of this woe, I am sensibly affected and grieved for you. Your parents, your friends, every good man, the indulgent God of Heaven, pity, and feel for you. O ! Sirs ! Pause, think what sinful courses tend to ! Say, seriously and solemnly to yourselves, if thou, my soul, indulgest to the follies and vices of that Prodigal, his fate, distressing and calamitous as it was, will be thy doom. I shudder at the view ! O ! good Heaven keep me from it ! I will fly from the appearance of such evil.—— But notwithstanding the serious impressions left on the mind by such a view of the issue of a wicked course ; and the good resolutions it may for the present inspire : the fond hope of a recovery by sincere repentance, and timely reformation may steal into the bosom ; and guided by the warmth of your imaginations and strength of your passions will overcome your resolutions, and seduce you into the forbidden, dangerous path. You will only indulge to the gaiety and pleasures youth calls for : and you will devote the calmer, and more sedate years of life to recover your
virtue,

virtue, dignity and peace. To detect the fallacy, and show the evil of such delusive expectations will be our business under the

Third observation----The *pungent remorse, and the bitterness of that repentance*; which alone can rescue us from the effects of youthful sins. *When he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, "How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare; and I perish with hunger? I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants."*

i. Observe. — The reluctance and difficulty; with which this Prodigal is brought to sincere and ingenuous repentance. When he found his fortune dissipated, and the bitter effects of vice overtaking him; does he think of returning to his father's house, with humble acknowledgments of his guilt, throw-

ing himself on paternal mercy. No! He was not sufficiently humbled. He had quitted his father's house with gaiety and parade: and could not bear the thought of returning in the condition of a beggar destitute of food and raiment. He rather choose to submit to the meanest employment; and to feel the extremity of want and shame: before he took a measure so mortifying to the secret pride and haughtiness of his mind. He offered his service to a person, who sent him to feed his swine: the husks on which they fed appeared to him a delicious repast, he was reduced to such indigence, and no man gave him a morsel of any kind. Hunger, slavery and shame at last awaken him out of his dream; these circumstances subdue the haughtiness of his spirits. When all hope, and remedy was cut off, but what arose from his father's clemency; then, and not before did he repent.---Hazard not therefore your happiness by depending on a future season of remorse and repentance, which in all probability only some peculiar circumstances will excite. Our LORD by introducing into this parable the circumstance of a famine; which fell out at the time, the Prodigal was reduced to want, and rendered his case almost helpless, leads us to ascribe
his

his repentance more to the effect of this famine on his condition, than to the first awakenings of conscience, or the common consequences of folly. With so great difficulty is the mind hardened by vicious indulgence brought to serious thoughts, and softened into penitent relentings: by repeated scenes of folly, the mind becomes averse to sober thought: its power over its actions and affections is enervated: the wretchedness and want, that ensue, cherish pride and reservedness: and shame prevents an ingenuous acknowledgment. Not to say, how base a thing it is to sin with the hope of repenting; it is most likely, the hope will deceive. But, if by a peculiar tenderness of conscience, or by adversity and woe, joined with the grace of GOD, the fumes of intoxication, which had blinded your understanding, should be dissipated: your pride should be humbled; and you should reflect and acknowledge your sins and follies with all the sentiments and feelings of unfeigned repentance; consider

2. How many circumstances will unite to make repentance more keen, and to fill the soul with bitter sorrow. The general circumstances which excited this distress and anguish in his mind, were not peculiar to the Prodigal in the text: but
are

are the natural, genuine and common attendants on youthful debaucheries.—To lay them before you. You can not imagine, how keen and piercing will be your reflections, when you find your fortune dissipated, and squandered away on rakes and prostitutes the pests of society, and the disgrace of human nature. How will you bear to look back on the days of innocence, when you were happy in the endearments of a father's house: in the esteem of the good, and in the prospect of many days of ease, health and joy? you will then recollect the kind and tender intreaties, the affectionate and faithful warnings of a prudent friend, or a parent. The eagerness, with which you hastened to forget them; and the disgust, with which you heard them, will rise to reflection: You will then think, how ungratefully you have overwhelmed and sunk down with griefs those, who desired to live only to see you good and happy. You will then begin to pity the kind and venerable parents; whose days, you have embittered, whose life you have shortened.—Methinks, I hear you cry out in the bitterness of your soul; “How base, how cruel has been my conduct! O! my parents! my father, my mother, against them have I sinned!” against all their care,
wisdom

wisdom and love ! Oh ! my parents ! Once more, you will recollect, that you have sinned against GOD, the holy, gracious and glorious Majesty of Heaven, against the guardian of your infancy and childhood ; against the GOD, whom you was early taught to revere and serve : whose eyes saw you in all the haunts of vice ; whose patience bore with your debaucheries and profaneness. You will remember, that you have offended against this GOD, the greatest and best of Beings : These bitter reflections will crowd in upon you ! these thoughts will rush in like a host of enraged enemies ! Heaven grant ! your sins may never drive you to the necessity of finding your safety in these bitter and torturing reflections ! In faithfulness and affection to you, I must warn you ; if like the Prodigal you give the reins to unsuspicious conceit, giddy passions, and vicious appetites ; you will like him, fall into distress, shame and woe : and unless you, like him, feel the anguish of repentance ; you must be for ever undone.

We have endeavoured to give you a just and affecting view of the folly and misery of youthful vices, as both are exemplified in the character of the Prodigal. And the
subject

subject inforces on you these dictates of wisdom and happiness : *flee youthful lusts--- Be sober minded.*

But then, my friends, let us not stop here : let our bosoms glow with generous, noble deeds. A sober, frugal and industrious temper is a worthy quality in youth. But beware ; from these deserving attainments, there arises a danger of failing in the more graceful, ornamental and useful virtues. There is another character in the parable before us, besides that of the Prodigal : which holds forth a picture of the deformity, that may stain a sober youth. The elder brother, though temperate and regular in his manners, and intent on improving the paternal estate, seems to have been a stranger to the principles of true goodness. His was a sordid, unfeeling and disagreeable temper. Vice in him assumed another form. He was not indeed led astray by the love of gaiety, luxury and riot : but he was void of the generous, humane and delicate feelings. Self engaged his whole attention and care. Hence he was austere and rigid, avaricious and sour. For he could think of the distresses and griefs of a brother, of a penitent brother without the emotions of benevolence, pity,

pity, or natural affection. He could behold unmoved, he could hear without relenting his good old father, with wisdom and meekness on his tongue, with condescension and kindness in his looks. Notwithstanding his high pretensions and confident boasts of virtue, the odious affections of pride, envy and selfishness were the outlines of his character.---My dear hearers, be not like to this ungenerous youth: avoid his insensibility, his want of tenderness. Be sober: be frugal: but with all be tender, humane, and generous. Let your hearts overflow in a perpetual stream of good will: and melt into compassion and sympathy. Relieve the distressed: soothe the afflicted: be the patrons of virtue: animate the reformation of the penitent: be the friends of mankind. Be frugal; that you may be furnished with the resources of liberality. Be sober; that your minds may remain untainted, to feel more exquisitely the pure joys of undissembled and universal love. Live, O! Ye, who are formed to display the charms, and taste the delights, and imbibe the sentiments of benevolence: Ye, who are called to follow a good GOD, and a good Saviour; live not for yourselves, but for mankind.

mankind. There are two characters; though opposite, both vicious, both to be carefully shunned; both odious, that of the extravagant debauchee; and that of the sober, but selfish and unfeeling youth. The former moves our pity: the latter begets our abhorrence and contempt. One is an enemy to himself: the other is an enemy to the principles of benevolence, and to the interest of human happiness.

On the whole, my young friends, *Whatsoever things are true; whatsoever things are honest; whatsoever things are of good report: whatsoever things are pure;* think on these things: to do this, will secure you from poverty and shame. But not contented with these attainments: aim at habits, still more engaging and useful; *and whatever things are lovely and generous: kind and benevolent;* think on, and study **THESE things**: *if there is any virtue; if there is any praise,* unite the pursuit of **BOTH**. And may a holy and good **GOD** smile on your virtuous aspirations; lead them on to the present acts of righteousness and charity; and crown them with honour in the regions of eternal purity and love. Amen.



S E R M O N III.

Y O U T H,

*Reminded of the Connection between the
CONDUCT of MAN in this Life, and
his Condition in a future State.*



MEMORANDUM

TO THE

Committee on the Constitution

of the United States

and

GAL. Ch. vi. 7.

*Be not deceived ; God is not mocked : for
whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*

MEN in general seem to forget and overlook the true and important notions of human life : which are founded in reason, and are everywhere taught in the system of revealed truths. They do indeed (to allude to the text) regard this life as the seed time : and here also they reap their harvests. But what is the *seed* sown by them ?----Lust, avarice, and ambition. And what are the *fruits* they gather in ?---sensual pleasure, wealth and power. These are pursuits and labours, very different from what they ought to indulge, as men and Christians. As such it becomes them to sow right affections, holy actions and good habits. In a future world is the harvest to take place.

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When

When immortality will pour in upon them its joys and sorrows This is the scene of virtuous trial and exercise : that of rest and reward. And consequently on the improvement, or neglect of the present state depends our lot and portion hereafter. The words I have read, hold forth these truths. *Be not deceived ; GOD is not mocked : for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.* These are sentiments of the greatest weight. Truths which none but the wicked can doubt : none but the abandoned would despise : and the most subtle cannot demonstrate to be false. May we feel their certainty and moment. They concern us ; what station soever we fill up : what period soever we have attained to in life. I would wish to make *youth* sensible of them : and particularly would leave on their minds a deep conviction of the tendency of their conduct through life : and of the connection between their behaviour in this, with their condition in a future world. An early and strong persuasion of this sentiment promises to have a very happy effect in fixing the good principles already received, and in forming their future manners. Indulge me then with your candid attention

tion and humble prayers, whilst I attempt to prove to you,

First---That there is a certain and inseparable connection between the conduct of men here and their state hereafter. And then shew you,

Secondly---That they who hope to escape misery or ensure happiness in opposition to this established order of the divine government, do only deceive themselves to their destruction.

First---I am to prove ; *that there is a certain and inseparable connection between the conduct of men here, and their ~~state~~ hereafter.* Be not deceived ; GOD is not mocked : for *whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.* He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption : but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. i. e. He who is now holy shall in a future state, be happy : he who is now sinful shall then be miserable. Goodness and life, vice and destruction are inseparable : they naturally flow from one another : and the sentence of GOD's tribunal will establish this connection for ever. To impress this truth on our minds we will

I---Begin with the proof of it from analogy ; or from *what takes place in the*

natural and material world. With respect to the fruits of the earth, the seasons of the year, and the changes of the weather, from the same causes constantly flow the same events and effects. Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles? The grain sown in the earth, produces regularly and at the like periods fruits of the same kind with what was sown. The different seeds of plants, herbs and flowers grow up, bud and flourish regularly in the different seasons and in the respective manner of their several species. Summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, day and night constantly succeed each other; and without any variation or confusion bring about the events suitable to their proper times and seasons. The kind influence of sun and the return of fair weather, never fails to be beneficial for the growth and maturity of vegetables. Storms and hurricanes, thunder and lightening, are always followed with ruin, devastation and horror, in proportion to their vehemence and duration. Indeed all things conspire in the material world with exquisite exactness to produce the most proper and regular effects. And since GOD has established such an order and disposition in the natural

ral world : is it not probable that he has appointed the same orderly connection of things in the *moral* world ? Does this connection in the former case subserve the purposes of growth and usefulness, contribute to the beauty of the creation, and shew forth the wisdom of the Almighty Creator and Governor ? And would not the same beauty, wisdom and usefulness be illustrated and displayed in the government and treatment of rational creatures, by a like regular and invariable disposition of causes and events ? Shall harmony, exactness, and certainty be conspicuous in the inanimate and less noble part of the creation ? and shall the moral and more excellent part be left exposed to disorder and confusion without any certain connection and correspondence of events ? Surely we cannot think so : and then it will indubitably follow, *that whatsoever a man soweth, that shall be also reap.* This truth may be confirmed

2.---By an appeal to every man's conscience.

Let me ask, who can dispute the real and intrinsic difference between actions and affections ? Who can affirm that piety humility meekness, justice and temperance are the same with profaneness, pride, wrath, injustice, luxury and drunkenness ? Who can

deny that the former are lovely, rational, and useful ? and that the latter are odious opposite to our rational constitution, and injurious to society, to our bodies and our souls ? And if every one must confess the ~~real~~ and unchangeable difference between good and evil : let me ask who can deny, who dare dispute that these actions and affections will be followed with different consequences according to their different natures ? what is lovely and rational can never produce the same effects with what is odious and irrational. Let every one ask himself, what he indeed thinks will be the consequences of some actions ? and every one's conscience will tell him, that piety and virtue will certainly insure peace, happiness and glory ; and that sin and wickedness will as certainly be followed with uneasiness, misery and shame. And let every one ask himself further, whether he can really, only for the space of one day, be firmly and soberly established in the belief of the contrary ? when his lusts, passions and sins incline him to believe, that no distinction will be made between the good and bad ; does not the opposite sentiment recoil and force itself through upon his mind ? And though he
may

may choak it with cares, or drown it with the intoxicating cup for a time, can he entirely get rid of it ? Does it not still adhere to him ? In his cool hours, in calm retirement, under affliction or in the view of death, does he not feel its power ; must he not own and confess its truth ? what is the meaning of those throws and throbs of an accusing conscience ? what is the cause of those fears and terrors, with which the wicked is haunted for actions to which no one is a witness, and for the thoughts which no eye can discern ? Do they not forbode some future account, some consequences, he does not expect will result from them at present, but which will take place in another world ? In a word, let any one say ; whether sin and iniquity can wholly root out the persuation of this truth, *that whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap*. If not, every man has in his own bosom a constant and indisputable proof of the inseparable connection between the present conduct and the future condition of man. To proceed,

3---This truth may be argued, from the *present* consequences of piety and virtue, or of sin and folly. What are the natural and genuine consequences of justice and

E 4.

integrity.

integrity, but reputation and credit ? what the effects of sobriety and chastity, but health and vigour of body ? what the fruits of meekness, benevolence and charity, but the esteem and affection of others ? of humility, devout resignation and pious gratitude ; but inward serenity, satisfaction and peace ? On the contrary, injustice and deceit produce want of reputation and confidence : impurity and drunkenness cherish diseases and pains : avarice and uncharitableness entail on us hatred, and provoke the curses of the fatherless and widow : uneasiness, the dominion of turbulent passions, heart-gnawing grief the enemy of all enjoyment are the consequences of pride, anger and discontent : divine entertainments animated hope and rational joys *now* flow from religion and goodness : the reproaches of conscience, shame, disgrace, and fear are *now* the effects of sin and vice.-----If these things take place in this state of imperfection : if such is the method of GOD's judicial government in *this* world, how constantly and invariably will these things take place in a more perfect state ? How much more clearly will the fruits of vice and virtue appear to be happiness and misery on a day of retribution. If such is the connection

nection of actions and events, of the habits of goodness and sin with bliss and infelicity at present: from whose will does this connection arise, but from the will of the Great Governor of the Universe; who has fixed this succession of things, and has thus shown his dislike to sin and his approbation of holiness: who thus appears at present on the side of virtue: and therefore we may expect will hereafter, more gloriously, more awfully, and conspicuously appear to reward goodness, and punish iniquity. Piety and virtue, sin and wickedness are connected with bliss and woe even in this state: but this is not a finished state: therefore this scheme of government will be carried on to greater perfection in another: where consequently the distinction between goodness and iniquity will be more completely established and more evidently regarded. So that whatsoever a man now sows; he shall reap then. This is clear

4-----From *the perfections of G O D.*
He has a perfect knowledge of the various actions and different affections of every being: so that no ignorance can mislead his judgment, and no art can conceal from his notice. He is a Being of perfect rectitude

tude, always doing what is right and fit. He must treat his creatures and subjects therefore according to their different tempers and characters; being infinitely holy in his own nature, he can approve of none but the holy and virtuous: these only can he reward, and others he will punish according to their demerits. To suppose the contrary, is to entertain the most injurious and dishonourable apprehensions of the Great GOD; it is to destroy his moral character and to efface from men's minds all true notion of him. If we presume on the mercy of our heavenly father, that he will be prevailed on to neglect the distinction between virtue and vice in his final dealings with his creatures; we form a false and deceitful apprehension of his mercy: for as only things possible are the objects of power; and things fit the objects of wisdom; so GOD's mercy can be extended to none but those who are the proper objects of it: amongst whom the impenitent cannot be reckoned: having not only violated the law of GOD, and affronted the divine government, but persisted also in such a course to the end. The Almighty must either cease to be righteous and holy; or he will reward holiness and punish sin: as
to

to the first, to assert it, is blasphemy ; and that it should take place, is impossible : the second is therefore certain, and it follows ; *that he who soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption : but he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting.*

5-----The impartiality of the divine government and tribunal, affords another evidence of the same truth. The apostle founds it on the same principle. *Rom. Ch. ii. 6, GOD says he will render to every man according to his deeds : for with him there is no respect of persons.*---The Great GOD looketh not on the outward appearance, but looketh at the heart. He regardeth not the external distinctions of wealth or rank, or beauty or wisdom. No professions of religion, no ostentation of piety and virtue can affect the process of his bar. Neither can any rewards bribe him from the exercise of strict justice. He taketh no gifts. His perfections and greatness exalt him above any such influences. He is infinitely happy in himself : with the clearest discernment does he penetrate into the nature and value of every claim to his favour : and the equity of his tribunal, of its enquiries, laws and decisions results from the infinite multitude which he possesses. Po

rich are equally the work of his hands, the former cannot escape his notice ; nor are the persons of the rich, great in his view. They whose rank and station, whose wealth and power may command the homage of the lip and the bending knee, from them who detest their actions and despise their characters, such must not expect or hope for any regard on these accounts at the bar of GOD. Titles, estates and honours have no power in the court of heaven ; unless to aggravate the crimes and to increase the punishment of those who have possessed and abused them to pride and intemperance, injustice and luxury. Let us attend to this, and it will weaken, it will prevent those impressions in favour of iniquity and sin ; the examples of the great wicked have too powerful a tendency to leave on the mind. In a word as there is no respect of persons with GOD, let this truth be ever remembered ; that nothing but real holiness, the practice of virtue and substantial goodness will avail us any thing at his bar.

Lastly. This is the doctrine of *many passages of holy writ*. It is expressly contained in the text : and is not less plainly and strongly asserted in numerous other places. To

refer

refer you to some. *Light is sown for the righteous ; and gladness for the upright in heart. * To him that soweth righteousness, shall be a sure reward. † He that soweth iniquity, shall reap vanity. ‡ The harvest is the end of the world ; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burnt in the fire ; so shall it be in the end of this world. The son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them who do iniquity ; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire : there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of the father. * Whatever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord ; and he who doeth wrong, the same shall he receive for the wrong he hath done. † The son of man shall come in the glory of his father, with his holy angels ; and then shall he reward every man according to his deeds. || To these let the well known description of the final judgment in Matthew xxv. be added. These declarations are strong*

* Ps. xcvi. 11. † Prov. Ch. xi. 18. ch. xxii. 8.

* Matt. Ch. xiii. 39---43. † Col. iii. 25. || Mat. xvi. 27.

strong and cogent proofs of the point in hand : if the account of scenes to be hereafter displayed, though at present invisible and distant : if truths, that are supported with all the weight of GOD's authority, can move us : and if we are not resolved to neglect GOD, our duty and eternity : these declarations will rouse our souls to the pursuit of pious virtue, and awfully restrain us from every sin : and they cannot be neglected, but at our infinite peril.——But this brings us to observe

Secondly---That they, who hope to escape misery, or ensure happiness in opposition to this established order of the divine government, do only deceive themselves to their own destruction. *Be not deceived ; GOD is not mocked : for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.* There is nothing of so great concern to us, as what shall become of us, when this state is no more ; there is nothing, about which we should be so solicitous and careful as our future welfare and eternal salvation. And yet alas ! there is nothing, about which men employ their thoughts so little ; and in which they are so easily imposed upon. Here they seem glad to practice the arts of self-deceit, and contrive expedients
to

to persuade themselves it shall go well with them hereafter. How eagerly do men catch at, and how closely do they adhere to; how zealously do they defend any doctrines or principles; which may answer this end. How confidently do they expect every thing from the mercy of GOD, or the merits of the Redeemer, or a sound faith, or a warm profession, or a partial and fruitless repentance. Being inclined to hope the best of their state, they are easily mislead: and readily embrace every thing, that may mislead them into a good opinion of themselves and their condition, with the least mortification and labour. Thus they are carried off from the pursuit of substantial goodness, and are led aside from the road of truth and virtue. Their attention is directed to the easiest points, that bear the name of religion, to the forms and appendages of godliness. They substitute something else in the place of real and uniform obedience: a zeal for the church, a constant round of ceremonies, the great appearances of humility and self-denial, an ill-directed and bigotted zeal for the honour, person and righteousness of the Saviour, and a great exactness in such things, as the tithing of mint, anise and cummin serve in

in the room of an active and diffusive benevolence, strict justice, meekness, candour, piety, and the weightier matters of the law. ---But this is not dealing fairly and honestly with ourselves : this is cheating our souls of eternal salvation by tricks, and cunning, and art. This is to bring ourselves to believe that we are rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing : when we really are wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. This is flattering ourselves with the hope of immortality, whilst we are walking in the road to destruction. And however we may delude ourselves by first wishing, and then also imagining that other things will answer our purpose as well as universal and persevering righteousness : yet GOD is not mocked. All our arts and evasions are vain with respect to him. Our affections, our actions, the habits we have contracted will determine our character, and fix our state, in his judgment : by which we must stand, or fall. Oh ! Let us not thus impose on ourselves, as we love ourselves ! let us by all means guard against this deceit. Let us remember, that the rule in the text will assuredly take place : if either reason or revelation is to be trusted. This principle is

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is as firm as heaven, and as certain as that there is a GOD. Let it then sink deep into our minds : it is established on so much evidence ; it is so founded on truth and equity ; it ought never, never to be forgotten by us.

To leave my young friends, indelible traces of it on your minds, has been the design of this discourse. It is of great moment to yourselves, that you entertain just sentiments of your life and the consequences of your present behaviour. The sentiments that have been now laid before you are of the utmost concern to *every rational* creature. The interest *you* have in them cannot be overlooked. For as they are the root and support of all religion and virtue ; so a firm persuasion of their truth will give a stability to all your early purposes for goodness ; which under the divine aid, neither the warmth of youthful passions, nor the ensnaring maxims of the wicked and abandoned, will be able to shake. It is no wonder when you are witnesses to the wide reign of iniquity under different forms ; to the gross immoralities of many ; to the careless indifference with which religion and futurity are treated by the generality and even by the more polite, sensible and

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refined

refined part of mankind ; and to the effrontery, with which the sons of prodigality and vice laugh at the restraints of piety and virtue ; it will not be surprizing amidst such an ap^aparent disbelief, if not contempt of religious obligations and principles, you should be inclined in some gay moments to regard a sober conduct as a needless scrupulosity, and the truths of religion as the inventions of policy in priests and statesmen, or the fruits of superstition imbibed in your earliest years. What has been observed furnishes an unanswerable reply to these suggestions : *a reply* read to us by the whole course of nature with a striking voice : engraven with deep and lasting characters on the human heart : confirmed by our daily experience of the present consequences of human conduct : receiving the strongest support from the nature of the divine perfections and government ; and which the books of sacred truth and everlasting life labour in innumerable declarations to teach us. From these things you learn to form an estimate of human life affecting and momentous to the highest degree. What the seed-time is to the harvest, that is the present life to eternity. This is the season for cultivating good affections, performing

performing good actions and establishing good habits. Hereupon much depends in this life, and in the next our *all*. Improve life and you will be happy : neglect it, and you will be miserable. Remember that the vigour of youth constitutes not only a pleasing, but an important part of human life. The activity of this stage is peculiarly fitted for the labours of the seed-time : and it will certainly enter into the account of a future reckoning and retribution. Besides, what can be more proper or serviceable, than on ~~the~~ ^{our} entrance ^{on} a state, which extends itself into eternity to make a pause, and survey the road before us. For the thoughts, views and temper with which we begin our course, will strongly influence our future deport : ^{right} as the first and the succeeding stages of life will fix our condition beyond the grave. Your existence is not a toy or a trifle, which you may throw away or abuse. Let not your prospects terminate in the tomb : the consequences of life do not. Eternity depends upon it : *Lay your schemes for eternity.*--Attend to these things : and learn to think highly of your existence and your behaviour here. Attend to them, and act virtuously and nobly. Sow the seeds of purity, and goodness, and truth :

and though the important culture should be attended with some fatigue and pain, with the tears of repentance and the sorrows of a combat : a glorious harvest of honour, triumph and bliss awaits you. View the virtuous dispositions and holy habits ripening for this rich and enlivening season with the eye of devout pleasure : and with quickness, vigour and zeal, press towards it. But if you sow to the flesh ; if you come under the power of vicious inclinations and persevere in a course of sin ; what will you *in that case* have to receive ? Not surely happiness, not the approbation of the Great Lord of the harvest : noreven an exemption from corruption and death. For *then* the world would not be judged in righteousness and truth : *then* men would not reap what they have sowed : nor would *you* receive according to the things done with repeated delight in the body.



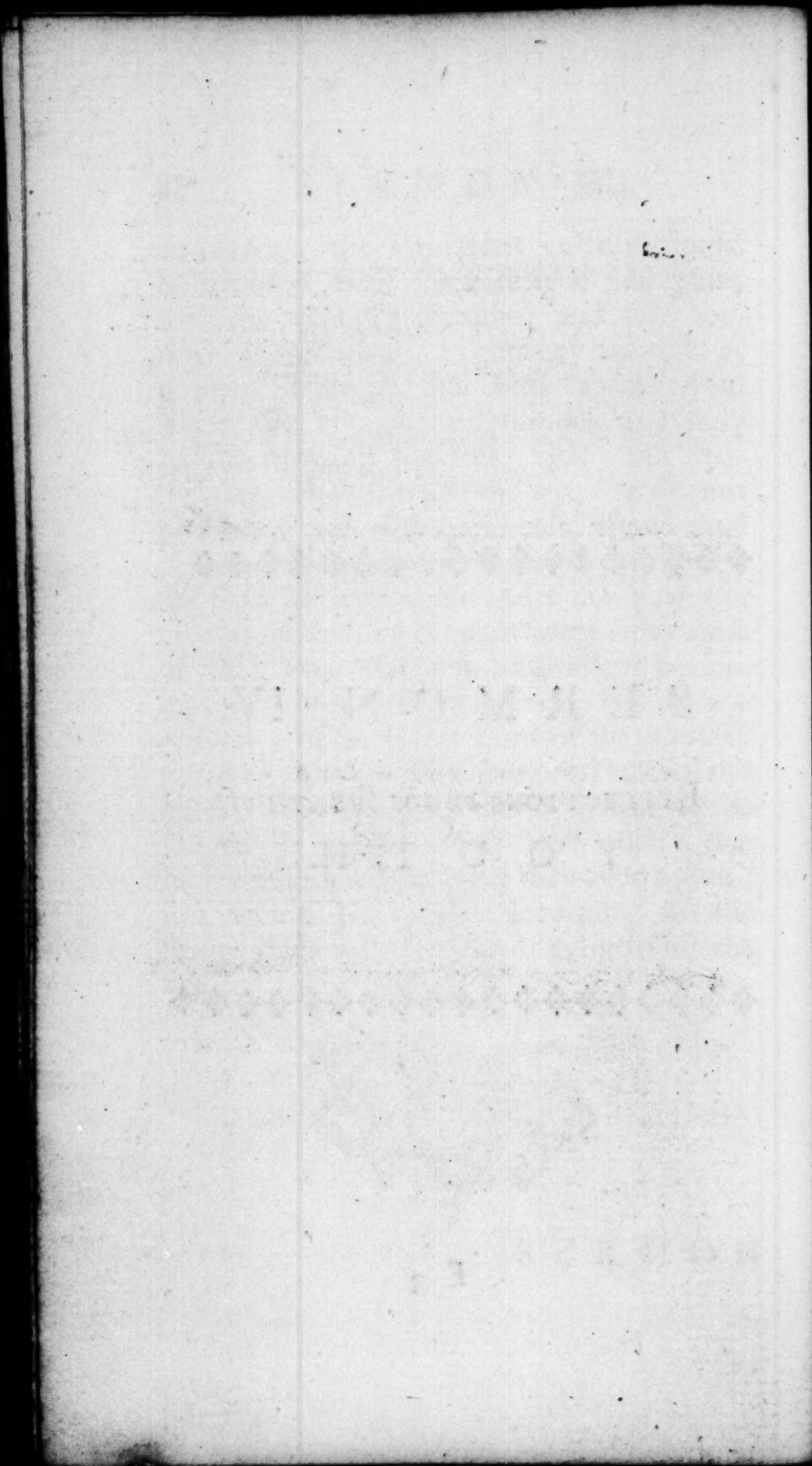
S E R M O N



S E R M O N IV.

REFLECTIONS *on the* DEATH of
Y O U T H.





LUKE. Ch. vii. 12.

*Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow : and much people of the city was with her.**

WHEN this affecting occurrence happened, our compassionate master was entering a city called **NAIM** : according to the account geographers give of the situation of this town, it was at some considerable distance from **CAPERNAUM** ; where he had rested the preceding night. The length of the journey, with some other circumstances, brought him in to the city towards the evening. Here he meets a funeral, attended with evident appearances of peculiar distress and respect : which served to call forth his compassion and to illustrate his divine power. “ Behold ! there was carrying out the corpse of a youth : he was the only son of his mother, and she a widow.” It was followed by the afflicted
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* This discourse was occasioned by the death of an amiable Youth ; whose opening virtues were very promising.

woman bathed in tears, and by a great multitude of sympathizing friends and acquaintance. So tender a scene could not fail of touching the heart of the good JESUS. He addresses the distressed mother with a kind affection, and unsolicited displays his sincere compassion and sacred energy; stopping the bier, he says, with an amiable modesty and divine authority; *young man, I say unto thee, arise*: Those few words are no sooner uttered, than the deceased youth arises and speaks. Without showing him round in ostentation and parade, he immediately delivers him to his mother, to testify the generous pleasure he took in her returning joy. This miracle was an engaging exercise of our Lord's character, both as to his power and goodness. The multitude of people, who conducted this corpse to the silent repository of the dead, prevents all suspicion that the youth was not dead; since to manage with success a fraud in which so many must have been concerned, is absolutely impossible. The accidental manner, in which this funeral was met by *Christ* forbids any apprehension of a collusion between him and the friends of the young man. And though doubtless this, like the other miracles of our Lord,

was

was wrought to manifest the works of GOD : yet the humble and affectionate temper with which it was performed, leads us to admire the modesty and humanity of CHRIST, no less than his power. Here are no pomp of words, no marks of vain glory, no desires of amazing the croud ; but all is conducted with an unaffected freedom and simplicity : his astonishing authority is softened, or, as it were, veiled under the robe of humility and the condescensions of the sympathizing friend. Amiable specimen this of the tenderness of our great Mediator : who has learnt from being a companion in woe to be touched with a sense of our infirmities and to succour us under our trials. And alas ! how often are our spirits tried with cases of distress in one respect or other similar to that in the text. The death of youth, and of lovely and deserving youth, is not an uncommon event. The different stages of human life furnish out their several instances of that universal mortality, which reigns over snowy age and blooming vigour. This law spares no ranks or dispositions : it gives not to vice, a space for repentance ; nor knows how to indulge amiable virtue : with an undistinguishing and un pitying eye, death seizes Absalom aiming
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at his father's throne ; and the son, the only son of his forsaken mother. A loss of this kind is peculiarly deplorable ; and if in any case we were able to secure others from going down to the grave ; we should be ready to exercise our healing power for those, who are growing up the delight of their acquaintance, the hope of society, and the joy of their parents ; such, whose dutiful affection was the support of a widowed mother ; whose opening virtues revive in the languor of age the pleasures and hopes of early life, and lead us to anticipate in our warm prospects the friends of religious liberty, a blessing to the trading community and the good man.---But the great Arbitrer of life and death disposes of them in a way very different, to what our partial views and blinded affections would dictate. And in his unerring wisdom, he takes away by a stroke, the rising support of pious virtue, the hope of society, and the parent's worthy darling. We cannot certainly penetrate into the design of these measures : but we shall more perfectly know them hereafter. At present, whoever will consider this fact ; which is too evident not to be owned, and too distressing not to move our tender feelings ; he will even in this dark
dark

dark scene, be able to trace out some footsteps of the loving kindness and wisdom of GOD. And

First,---The death of youth is *agreeable to the method of the divine government in other instances.* Flowers, insects and animals in all the variety of their different species are under the care of that universal Parent; whose inimitable hand paints the lilly, and whose condescending providence watches the sparrows fall. We find that with respect to trees and plants, a vast multitude of blossoms open and smile upon us, which fade and drop without giving any other appearance of beauty; and frequently the loaded branches are relieved of a very considerable burden by winds or storms, or by the quantity of their productions; before they reach a state of maturity and perfection. Amongst animals, great numbers never attain to the period of improvement and service, for which their powers and constitution are adapted, but are cut off whilst proceeding towards it: and perish as soon as they begin to answer the purpose of their place in the creation. The same awful havock prevails among our own kind: numbers, ere they ripen into manhood, are sent down to the regions; where there is no
work

work nor device. The apparent waste in the former case, and the untimely exits in the latter, are both under the direction of the same infinite wisdom, and the intention in both may lie equally remote from our scanty views.----It is clear that the fact as it takes place with respect to rational beings, falls in with and promotes *one end* ; that prevails under the divine government, I mean, the enjoyment of happiness in very different degrees. Every youth removed from our world, causes a diversity of satisfactions in the condition of those with whom he is connected, and in the future existence of intelligent creatures. His own rank and felicity in another state must be much affected by the untried capacities, with which he enters into it ; by the attainments he has already reached to in knowledge and virtue, and by his exemption from the snares, to which a longer life would have exposed him : the present happiness of his friends, their religious temper, and their consequent share in the bliss of immortality will likewise be not a little influenced hereby. The communication of happiness in various degrees, as it evidently appears to be the design of the original source of life in creation and providence, so it does not furnish
any

any just ground of discontent : unless it was a rational matter of complaint, that we were not placed in the highest rank of beings, and rendered capable of the greatest felicity. Nay, we find the waste of blossoms and unripe fruit, is even necessary to the maturity of the remaining fruit : not less expedient is it perhaps for the religious and moral improvement of the human race, that some should fall short of the perfection of grown men and be nipped in their bloom. ---It further deserves notice, that in the present state no such distinctions between men happen : as would be inconsistent with a state of trial ; but this would be the case if virtue was to be attended with a redemption from the grave : or if the vigour of early years was to be proof against the arrows of death. *This* would encourage a dissoluteness of manners : *that* would make a separation between the wicked and good, too glaring and overpowering. *This* would set the prospect of death too far off, to affect youth : *that* would render its sentence too discriminating, and lay too great a restraint upon our conduct. Either, so far from strengthening would weaken the expectation of a future state. On the whole, the present constitution, which involves youth

youth with advanced years in the same lot of mortality, appears agreeable to other instances of the divine government. Proceed we to observe

Secondly---That the early death of youth is suited to teach *parents many useful lessons* in an affecting manner.---Our busy and giddy hearts are too unapt to learn and too ready to forget the principles of religious virtue: even years do not always teach this wisdom. Or when the parental authority is employed to instill them into the opening minds of our attentive offspring, they come from us rather as words of course, than as the sentiments of a deeply affected mind. Whilst we are instructors to them, we need their death to admonish and teach ourselves. There are many truths. nothing will so forcibly impress, as this distressing event. When the lively circle of children and youth is flourishing round our board, each word and action that betokens the opening virtues of humanity and piety, kindles the expectation, and brightens the prospect of the dignity, virtue and usefulness with which they will appear on the stage of manhood; comfort our declining age; maintain our name in the world; and by which we shall, as it were,
live

live and flourish again. Let the night of death throw its dark veil over any one of these ornaments of our family and house ; then we find how transient and vain are all the hopes earth's most pleasing objects inspire. Every beauty of person, every charm of growing life, that appeared to give firmness to our prospects, strengthens the conviction of their vanity. Our pleasing thoughts are broke off : a coffin and a grave are the melancholy trophies of our disappointed schemes. And *now* the virtues, with which they bloomed, beget other and nobler views. We no longer anticipate the period, at which they would have ripened into manhood : but dwell on that time, when instead of surviving in them, we shall go to their exalted and improved spirits : and shall receive to our embraces a glorified saint. These new and heavenly hopes being raised in the parent's breast, they now more sensibly feel and more seriously think of their own mortality. Their minds in these moments, being conversant with some of the most affecting scenes of mortality, contract a temper more suitable to their advanced years and the grave they are hastening to. Such early exits cannot fail to remind them of
their

their own approaching evening. Every time the image of the dear creature rises to the memory, the impression is renewed ; and the recollection of the awakening providence is a constant monitor and warning to them, that their concluding days should be more regular and spiritual. Such convictions of the vanity of the world and the progress of their days, dispose them more to fix their affections on GOD ; who liveth for ever : and to form expectations of happiness from a being whose favour and perfections cannot disappoint or fail. The heart becomes more disengaged for his service and love ; and in the bitterness of their spirits they learn the value of a rational confidence towards *him* ; who can be better to them than ten children ; and who is disposed to grant a name and an inheritance better than that of sons and daughters. And when, Christians, you have felt the death of a lovely child exciting these interesting lessons, and begetting a firmer attachment to the greatest and best of Beings, when you have experienced the gloomy scene to be so instructive and useful, have you not silenced every murmur, and acknowledged at once the reasonableness of resignation and of being soothed by its influence

influence ? Finding it gave your soul a sublimer direction to heaven and to an everlasting portion, you have seen the wisdom, that visited you with distress ; and the goodness, that mixed up the bitter draught : Hence acquiescence in the Divine Will became a delight as well as a duty ; and you have been ready to adore with thankfulness that heavenly parent, who removed from your sight the object of your fond affection, in order to fill up the vacancy with an object who alone deserves, and who alone can answer the most intense regard. This sweet submission will teach parents to behold with a more moderate, yet with a more rational and devout joy their remaining comforts and surviving children. This affecting memorial of the vanity of childhood and youth, and of the uncertainty of their lives, and the sacred power of that divine affection with which their hearts now aspire to GOD, will render parents not only better scholars, but also more improving instructors in the school of wisdom and virtue. They ought, and by the grace of GOD they will, become more affectionate monitors and more perfect models to the rest of their offspring. They will be anxious by the earliest impressions of reli-

gion and goodness to prepare *them* for an immature death. And they are warned not to be so solicitous to treasure up wealth for them, whose only portion perhaps may be a little coffin and shroud. Now if these affections and resolutions be formed, if their cares and views are thus taught to flow in a purer channel; we see why the Sovereign of life calls parents to the tender contest of leaving their blooming delights in the grave. But this dispensation has also a moral aspect of more extensive influence; for

Thirdly.---The death of youth has an apparent tendency to leave the best convictions on *the minds of all*. Who can (according to the history in the text,) make one in the funeral of the only son of a widow, without being conscious to the tender overflow of pity and compassion? by such affecting scenes are the emotions of benevolent sympathy excited and improved: we are prompted to pour the healing balm of consolation into the wounded heart, and with a gentle hand to wipe off the tears from the declining head of age; when perhaps no son, or child survives to perform the kind office. Hereby scope is given for the duties of humanity; our acquaintance

acquaintance is increased with the principles of consolation and the prospects, immortality unfolds. The fortitude and resignation, with which we see, the pious parent meets and supports so heavy an affliction, sensibly touches us with the excellency of his faith, and the happiness of his holy attainments. An example so tried shows the dignity of religion, and the superior value of heavenly connections and heavenly hopes.---You follow, Sirs! to the tomb what was once beautiful, sprightly and gay. The fair and engaging form is now a spectacle too disgusting to be exposed to view: the youth, whose outward graces and mental charms, a few day since pleased every eye, and enlivened every heart, is now the companion of worms. Where shall we learn the vanity and uncertainty of life, if not taught it by the grave of the young. The hoary head, the weight of years lays in the dust, may remind us of the shortness of life, when it attains its longest date: but he only, who dieth in the morning of his days, teaches us, that whilst “all flesh is grass; all *the glory and loveliness*, of it is like the flower of the field.”---You see the tender plants rooted up, and the glowing colours fade away on the withering

buds; are you not instructed in the importance of turning to objects, that will encourage a firmer expectation and more lasting hopes. You are ready to own, that all the prospects raised by the vigour of youth, the strength of an unimpaired constitution, and the earliest habits of goodness, are only visions and dreams. You find by these instances of mortality; that the continuance of the human race, the interests of communities, and the preservations of the church, depend not on the will and life of man; but on the agency, presence and will of GOD: who is pleased to remove the most flourishing hopes of families, of towns, and of the evangelical kingdom; that we may learn not to trust in sons and daughters, and the most promising children of men: *for their breath goeth forth, they return to the earth*, and that very day their thoughts, and all the pleasing schemes connected with their life, perish in the regions of forgetfulness and inactivity. Hence we catch the triumphant accents of the apostle with respect to every interest, we account dear and valuable, and particularly the preservation and advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom: *I know, whom I have believed; and I am persuaded, he is able to keep*

keep what I have committed to him against that day.---Lastly.---When you are called to wear the habits of mourning for those, who had not advanced nigh so far in life; for those, who had just begun to live for any valuable purpose, when they were summoned to die, will you presume on vigour and bloom: presume to forget your own death; or to boast on length of years? rather, it is so just, so natural, so momentous a purpose; you should resolve to repair the loss sustained in their departure, by the vigorous employment of your riper powers; and by all the generous and noble services of a pious manhood. Let not this loss be aggravated by our criminal neglect of life; abuse not the continued gift of Heaven. Let us be, according to our sphere, what the rising supports of virtue, happiness and the church, promised to have been. Be it to our honour and the felicity of others; *that our days were not cut off in the midst.* Knowing not how soon the graves may be ready for us also; let this redouble our diligence and zeal. Such sentiments, so suitable to the dispensation, we are considering, especially become *them*: who are most prone to forget *them*.---This leads me to observe.

Fourthly——That the removal of youth ~~removes~~ ^{was kept} by an untimely death, in an awful manner, *the importance of early piety. Remember, say Solomon, thy Creator in the days of thy youth: whilst the evil days will not come.* I would now take occasion to say, remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth; for these days; may to many of you never come, to afford you the least opportunity for repentance. I say not this on the authority of my own judgment: the thickset and returning monuments of Youth's mortality say this: your own mind and fears preach this lesson. Need you attend to the observations suggested by the nature of the case: 'That
 ' in your stage of life, chances multiply
 ' upon you: the seeds of disorders are sown
 ' by neglect; not to mention intemper-
 ' ance: infectious distempers are more easily contracted; when contracted, rage
 ' with greater violence; and the success in
 ' many cases is more doubtful; insomuch
 ' that they who have exercised themselves
 ' in computations of this kind, tell us that
 ' one half of the species, who are born
 ' into the world, go out of it again; and
 ' are all dead in so short a space, as the first
 seventeen

“seventeen years.” * Some awful instances of the truth of these remarks have lately fell under our notice. You can not overlook those badges of mourning, in which many of us are arrayed. You have not so soon forgot your own reflections on the melancholy occasion. You have thought with yourselves, you might very likely receive the next visit from the King of Terrors, and next fall victims to his sentence, young and healthy as you find you are. These things being fresh in your memories, do not think it harsh in me, to read you a lecture of death and eternity. It would be strange and unkind in my apprehension, did I not join in with your reasonings to countenance and strengthen them. They are reasonings so proper and useful: I would wish you to retain a conviction of them! May the Great Father of our spirits engrave them on your hearts, as with the point of a diamond! They teach you the reasonableness, the excellency, nay, the necessity of religion in persons of your age. They urge an immediate attention, and an immediate regard to the concerns of Eternity. When you think on the dead; Eternity no longer

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appears.

* Sterne's Sermons, Vol. II. P. 95.

appears remote and distant. On this account various are the inducements, which press you to mind the one thing needful. Your *early* piety may be of infinite, it is certainly of vast consequence. If your existence is lengthened out through future years; each year will be a glorious addition to the services, bliss and honour of a worthy and useful life. If your strength is weakened in the way: how gladdening is it to think, that you will enter into the future regions and appear at the bar of God, with all the peculiar graces of the earliest wisdom and goodness: that each friend of virtue, with your afflicted parents, will drop the tear of affection over your grave: and that the memory of your growing virtues, will live in their minds to sooth their anguish, and to heal their wounded spirits. Your exit, you are sensible, will pierce them through with bitter sorrows. You would not certainly run the danger of heightening their agonies by a vicious course. Duty and honour require a different conduct of you; they require you to be pious and good betimes in this, to lay the foundation of a valuable life, or a comfortable death: a death comfortable to all that love you, and pregnant with everlasting joy to yourselves. As
long

long as the names of your companions and acquaintance, that have left us ; (ah ! too too soon for our wishes, but not too soon for their glory,) as long as their names continue dear to you, you will not want a Monitor to religious virtue. Follow their steps ; surpass them in their excellencies : in no very distant period you shall renew friendship with their good spirits, without being ever again called to the painful office of attending them to their graves : an office not known in that world, where the vigour of youth for ever blooms. The mention of their felicity reminds me to observe in the

Fifth place——'That this dispensation, which removes promising and virtuous youth by death, is *certainly and unspeakably to their advantage*. When parents see the enlivening object of their dearest regard sink into the grave ; they may be ready to wish, that the same powerful friend had lived in their days, and by his almighty compassion had appeared for them ; as for the distressed widow, when he spoke her only son to a new intercourse in the services and joys of a recovered life and vigour. —He is indeed present with his universal energy and authority governing all things
in

in heaven and earth. They, whom he restored from the dead during the period of his visible ministry on earth, were specimens of that kindness and power; with which he would, when withdrawn from our notice, use the keys of death and the unseen world. Delightful assurance! that great Minister in GOD's kingdom, that compassionate SAVIOUR, who turned the sorrows of a weeping widow into a torrent of joy, is near to watch the last groan of departing worth, and to take our dear children under his own more immediate patronage and care. It is true! the agreeable prospects of their growing up the ornaments and supports of religion and blessings to the world are vanished. But then a prospect with respect to them more certain and not less gladdening succeeds.—If you desired to secure their piety and fix their happiness, it is done. They have reached that state; where no snares can seduce, no mistakes injure, and no griefs assail them. Not to say, you can not now meet the bitter disappointment of seeing them fall victims to human folly, vice and misery: they have escaped the dangers, to which your partial fondness and blinded views exposed them. And they are under the tuition
of

of an heavenly Father, and the conduct of an heavenly guide ; who by the noblest culture will ripen their faculties and virtues ; who will enrich them with the most valuable possessions ; and who will call them forth to sublimer and more successful services.

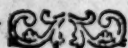
The dispensation which as to us, suddenly blasts the bloom of youth, only removes the delicate plant to an happier soil and calmer climes. The tender fears, with which its growth would have been watched, are exchanged for the certain prospects of its flourishing in the paradise of GOD. The best wishes, you could form for them are really accomplished, without any further intervening temptations and hazards. And how painful soever in one light may be their sudden death: as the pledge of their sudden glory and felicity, it should be regarded with a joyful sympathy. In the moment they laid aside all title to the inheritance you intended them ; they were raised to the enjoyment of a more glorious inheritance. — Such an happy aspect has the removal of amiable and deserving youth on their own state and felicity. This joined with the former considerations of its good tendency to instruct and improve the world parents and youth by impressing
in

in an affecting manner a variety of important lessons, is sufficient to convince us; that GOD is both wise and good : when he numbers our promising youth with the dead.

We can allow only a few words to the conclusion of this discourse. The subject has undoubtedly raised many a distressing and serious thought in all of us. It is the intent of the dispensation, we are considering to excite such, and it will be our wisdom to indulge them. It is a very affecting and useful event ; when the growing expectations of a family, of society and the church are buried in the dust ; not to learn the lessons such a providence reads, is to aggravate the affliction, and to add to it the heavier evil of an unteachable mind.---Parents bleeding with these wounds, should most readily apply the balm of wisdom to soothe and heal their hearts ; that whatever they have lost in an hopeful child, may be repayed in the sentiments of resignation, piety and morality ; by which it forms their tempers and lives.----Youth should learn from following the amiable companions and objects of their friendship to the tomb, to consider their own latter end.----Let us all learn the vanity of the world,
the

the uncertainty of life, and the principles of divine confidence and trust.-----Thus improved the death of lovely and promising youth will become very useful. The great Governor of the world having seen fit to cut off immaturity, the growing instruments of service, does even by this step render them truly serviceable. He calls them not by a series of future words and deeds, as we would fondly imagine, but by their dying breath to be the solemn monitors of wisdom, and the successful preachers of virtue. They depart, to beget the spiritual life of some and to improve that of many. Being dead ; they speak the most interesting truths, and promote our truest welfare by the lectures their graves read. Oh ! may it be our care to regard the design of their removal ! may the desolation of your houses, my dear friends, be always so instructive ! then joy will mingle with all your sorrows, and even from your dying blossoms fair and nourishing fruit will spring up.-----May the children, who survive after such melancholy breaches, be those friends of GOD, those patrons of religious virtue, and those blessings to the world, which you imagined the deceased was growing up !-----Be it your concern

concern and ambition, my young friends, that the loss, we bewail should not be im-bittered by your folly and vice. Our affection to you prompts us to pray ; that you may be numbered with your companions, and mingle your dust with their precious remains ! rather than you should live to become the votaries of sin, and to disappoint our virtuous hopes.---And may parents, through the tears, with which they mourn for their offspring read the will of GOD, that directs the fatal arrow ; of that GOD who gave his own son for us, and takes away our sons and daughters to draw us to the enjoyment of himself, as the everlasting portion of our souls. Each virtuous and amiable child removed hence, has added one further charm and joy even to paradise itself.----And affords to us all, a very useful spectacle to warn us ;—How to live---and how to die. May GOD make us all good scholars. Amen.





S E R M O N V.

The HAPPINESS, Trust
That flows from RELIGIOUS ~~Worship~~



ESTABLISHED 1850

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PSALM xxxiv. 8.

*O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is
the man that trusteth in him. **

THE Scriptures afford us the clearest and sublimest views of the divine perfections: but the perfection, dwelt on with a peculiar emphasis, which they again and again return to with high delight, and celebrate in the noblest strains, is the *goodness* of God. The deity himself has not only displayed this attribute in a variety of the kindest effects; but has, as it were, showed himself anxious to give the fullest and most encouraging proofs of his great benevolence: that not any doubt or suspicion of it, might harbour in the human mind: *th* that the soul might be *fully* allured to the love of God: that our obedience might be
H our

* This Discourse was preached at the funeral of a pious, worthy young man; who died of a lingering consumption at the age of 25.

our choice and pleasure : and that the strong and numerous evidences of his goodness might serve as a generous antidote to relieve the gloom and sorrow, with which the evils of life might in any season affect us, and as a soothing balm to heal the spirit wounded with affliction and grief. The persuasion that this perfection dwells in the Almighty, and reigns through all the designs of his government, is the spring of true religion and chearful homage : and the foundation and incentive of calm repose and steady confidence amidst all changes and events, under every thing we feel and every thing we fear. “ How excellent (says the Psalmist) is thy loving-kindness : therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.” And in the text, *O taste and see that the Lord is good : blessed is the man that trusteth in him.* In the words are two points,

First --- That the Goodness of GOD renders the condition of that man, who trusts in him, happy.

Secondly---The Psalmist’s invitation to taste and see the divine goodness. On these two points I would insist, and then apply the words to the present affecting occasion.

First

First---I would show, that the goodness of GOD renders the condition of that man who trusts in him, happy. The pious Psalmist having recorded the gracious interposition of the divine providence for his own support and relief, under some distressing and threatening occurrence, takes occasion from his own experience of the mercy of GOD, to invite others in those exercises of devout hope and confidence, which in his particular case had been so richly and suitably repayed. This invitation to taste the goodness of GOD, is followed and supported by a general reflection on the happiness of those who trust in him. The manner in which this reflection is introduced, clearly points out the goodness of the deity, as the ground and security, the spring and cause of the felicity of the man who confides in him. *O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.*---The idea of an Almighty, supreme and eternal Sovereign and Lord astonishes and debases, if it does not affright the soul: it is the exercise of this amazing power and supreme authority in the protection and welfare of the creatures and subjects of the Great LORD of All, that pleases and delights the heart, that encourages and

amiable attracts our hope towards him. Happy the man, whom these ~~amiable~~ sentiments of the deity teach to trust in him, by a calm and full submission to the providence of the Almighty, and a steady chearful application to his patronage and care. For the goodness of GOD effectually secures to him

First---*Compassion*, and a *favourable answer to his prayers*. This thought seems to have been particularly in the Psalmist's view; for in verses 4, 15, 17. He expressly introduces it. *I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous; they cry, and the Lord heareth them.* This thought with a delightful emphasis occurs in other passages: there are two, which lie so obviously to our notice, and which are so pregnant with comfort and peace, you will with pleasure permit the recollection. The first you find in 1 Pet. ch. v. 7. *casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.* The other we meet with, Phil. ch. iv. 6, 7. *Be careful for nothing: but in every thing by prayer and supplication; with thanksgiving let your request be made known unto GOD: and the peace of GOD, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and mind in CHRIST JESUS.* But no passage gives us
a more

S E R M O N V. 101

a more clear, or more affecting view of this thought ; than the short, but convincing and endeavouring account of the compassions of GOD, in Psalm. ciii. 13. *Like as a Father pitieth his children ; so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.* Parents, whose eyes have swelled with tears of tenderness, and whose hearts have yearned with compassion over their sick and languishing babes, have in their bosoms a pledge and specimen of the tender mercies of our heavenly parent : who with like pity listens to every prayer, and feels every groan of his rational offspring. — That the Almighty does behold and regard him with pity ; the devout man has no more doubt of, than he has of his wants and sorrows. He knows that GOD is the author of all those tender mercies, of which the human heart is susceptible ; because the human soul owes its existence and all its capacities to feel and sympathize to his power and pleasure. He knows, that GOD condescends to provide food for the fowls of the air, and to preside over the fall of a sparrow. He knows that GOD saw a world sunk into guilt and sin, with such warm compassion ; that he sent that most glorious and excellent person JESUS CHRIST to labour, suffer

and die for its recovery. He finds that his soul under every sense of weakness, under every grief and fear, naturally, of its own accord, sends up its thoughts and wishes above: a strong presumption, that God, who gave it this tendency to Heaven for help, who teaches it thus to breathe after divine succour and protection, will befriend and visit him with his tender mercies. The devout man further knows, that the LORD of this and the other world will grant an existence in a future and better state: where there will be no sorrow, nor pain; no difficulties to embarrass, no fears to alarm. From all these principles he draws this cheering conclusion; that his case whatever it is, is known, is commiserated by God: a conclusion that makes him happy in his own breast; for it softens every sorrow, and lightens every load. Who has not felt it to be a great happiness; if under some oppressive calamity, any good man or gentle friend condescended to hear the painful tale of woe and sorrow, appeared to be touched with it, interrupted it with his own tears of sympathy, and assisted him to go thro' the piercing detail with words of consolation, and offers of help. Now if human
compassions,

compassions, (partial, selfish and weak as they are) when streaming out from the friendly or parental heart, communicate relief, nay, mingle pleasures with our grief, and brighten with a soft joy the countenance bedewed with sorrow : how happy is the man, whose devout confidence moves the compassions of GOD ; compassions, which flowing from infinite, original benevolence are full, rich and lasting : *they* are divine ; the compassions of an ever present and ever gracious parent and friend.

Secondly----The Goodness of GOD will secure all necessary assistance and support to the man, who trusts in him : a circumstance that renders his condition truly happy. *The Lord is nigh unto them that are of an upright heart ; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. He keepeth all their bones, that not one of them is broken,* ver. 18, 20. The compassions of GOD are not vain and ineffectual, as those of man too often prove. In our heavenly parent and friend, unite every attribute for the proper display of his tender mercies : Almighty power, universal presence, all-animating energy, with his unerring wisdom, render him equal to the relief and support of all his creatures ; various as are
H 4 their

their cases, numerous as their wants, and aggravated as their distresses. There is not a creature, there is not a place, but what feels his supporting presence; seeing he giveth to all, life, breath, and all things. The natural strength of human spirits, the kindness and succour of friends, and the provision which the accommodations of life, and our share of earthly blessings yield to our assistance and support, may do something; may contribute much to sooth our sorrows and lighten our burdens, to cheer and fortify the mind under gloomy scenes and threatening prospects.-----But there are cases and degrees of suffering, these emollients cannot reach, or alleviate. To, instance in one,---A distemper seizes the vital parts; the skill of the Physician, and the power of medicine fail; no soft attendance of friendship; no tears of love can sooth the raging fever: days of languishing are succeeded by wearisome nights: every breath forces a groan: and profuse sweats hasten the decay of the emaciated frame. Here human affection feels its weakness, and is distressed by its inability to communicate relief and support: but here religious confidence displays its triumphs,

umphs, and reigns with the happiest influence. Animated by its expectations from GOD, animated by the prospects he unfold, and the consolations he imparts by the gospel, *the Soul* is vigorous and healthy, notwithstanding the pains and decays of the frail body; and frequently when faith and hope rose high, the most distressing nights have been the beginning of Heaven to the mind.

—Or in other instances; the care of our divine patron, to those who take refuge in his government and protection, is exercised in different methods; an unexpected turn is given to our affairs: unthought of steps or measures of conduct are suggested; friends whose names a little before were unknown are raised up: new sources of light, strength and comfort are opened. So wisely, so graciously does our heavenly Father attemper our temptations and our vigour; and suit his communications to our wants. The salvation of the righteous is of the LORD: He is their strength in a time of trouble. ——— Numbers can bear their chearful testimony to this truth. Hear the language of the Psalmist, and from the composure and steadiness of his mind learn the happiness of those, who trust in the LORD. *The Lord is the strength*

strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid. Though an host encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise up against me in this will I be confident. I will not be afraid of ten thousand of people, that have set themselves against me round about: Yea, tho' I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: Thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." Hear the triumph of the Apostle; *And he has said unto me, my grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness: most gladly therefore, (he adds) will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of CHRIST may rest upon me.* This privilege of divine succour is not peculiar to a few eminent Saints. It is secured to every devout man, to every one who trusts in the Almighty, by the faithfulness and promise of GOD: and it flows from his goodness, which is universal over all the works of his hands. *Fear not, (says GOD to his antient church of Israel, a promise designed for the comfort of every individual, who composed that happy province of the divine care) Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee*
with

with the right hand of my righteousness. † Not less adapted to every case is the like enlivening declaration of the New Testament. *GOD is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able: but will with the temptation make a way for your escape, that you may be able to bear it.* Yes, so much condescension has GOD, the Father of mercies used to afford the most grateful satisfaction and hope to those, that wait on him; he has appointed JESUS CHRIST, that compassionate High-Priest, to be the guardian of our comfort and peace: and he has invited and commanded us to come boldly to the throne of grace; that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in every time of need.—Is not the man blessed who trusteth in GOD, and whose bosom is inspired with these rational and animating prospects and hopes? *Wait then, Sirs! on the Lord, and dismiss all apprehensions and fears; in every emergency take courage; and he shall strengthen thy heart; wait, I say, on the Lord.* It is another distinguishing ingredient and favourable circumstance in the happiness and portion

† *Isai. ch. xli. 10.*

tion of those, whose refuge is in the protection and providence of the Almighty,

Thirdly----That, *they shall receive at last a full and triumphant deliverance out of all their calamities.* With this sentiment is the text introduced, and the Psalm concludes with it. *The Angel of the Lord encampeth round about them, that fear him and delivereth them: O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him. Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all. The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants, and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.* In common with the rest of mankind, the best and worthiest persons meet with the evils and calamities, which are the expedient and useful appendages of the present state. All the course of nature must be altered: every thing that relates to this world must change its nature; before they can be exempted from the disadvantages and distresses incident to this scene. The only distinction they can reasonably desire, and which by divine confidence and pious virtue, they may undoubtedly secure, is fortitude to sustain, and wisdom to improve their afflictions whilst they continue: and when they have answered the valuable purposes.

poses for which they were sent a seasonable release from them. And this distinction and privilege by every dictate of reason, and by all the precious promises, with which scripture abounds, they are led to forebode to themselves. The very temper and disposition of their minds towards the all-powerful and benign Sovereign of the world, is a token of good to them: a token, that the events of life have attained with them the great intention of that holy power, which over-rules all things; and therefore a token, that those distresses which have produced a conformity and full submission to his government, will be removed. Having executed the errand on which they were sent as the messengers of pious wisdom, and the executioners of the divine corrections, they will be recalled. I know many can confirm this reasoning by their own observation and experience of the wisdom and kindness of providence. They recollect with sentiments of wonder and gratitude those seasons of life; in which when the threatening and distressing prospect of some calamity has impressed them with a deep sense of their dependence on GOD, and has brought their soul into a sweet harmony of resignation to his will, as most
wise

most wise and gracious : then has the gloom been scattered and the approaching evil been averted, though just ready to burst on their heads with all its weight and sorrow. ---Say then, is not that man, with the utmost propriety pronounced blessed : whose faith, resignation and hope are indulged with the reward of staying the hand of the Almighty and preventing the evil, which he feared.——But those temporal deliverances, with which they are by the overruling power of GOD visited, bear no proportion to that complete and triumphant redemption, which awaits them hereafter. Every release, every mitigation of their trouble at present is a pledge of that pure and perfect recovery and release ; in which their spirits shall rejoice in a happier world. Let the flesh with hastening decay consume ; let the heart fail : still GOD is the strength of their heart ; GOD is their portion for ever. From circumstances of the lowest humiliation ; from corruption and the grave, shall his voice call them to life, vigour and joy. His hand shall conduct them to the regions of peace and felicity ; and his favour shall raise them to honour and security everlasting. Where the pale face, the languid body, the feeble joints,
weak

S E R M O N V. III

weak infancy, decrepit age, painful, or pining sickness, awakening fears, and consuming cares will never be known. They shall no longer trust the Almighty with wavering diffidence: no longer shall dark suspicions check the ardor of their hope: no longer shall sighs interrupt their prayers. For all shall be light about them: every tear shall be wiped away from the eye; and every prospect of evil shall be removed to an infinite distance from that blest abode. Where every thing will display the power and excellency of the love and friendship of their GOD: where every thing will contribute to establish, improve and heighten their felicity and joy. Raptured with the smiles of the eternal father, and born away with the delight that flows incessant from the throne of GOD, they shall in a sublimer sense adopt the words of the Jewish church. *Lo! this is our God, we have waited for him, and he shall save us: this is the Lord, we have waited for him; we will be glad, and rejoice in his salvation.*

And now what shall we say to these things? Happy, thrice happy are they; whose hope is stayed on the Lord their GOD: whose soul trusts in him? What effect

effect shall these things have upon us? what bias do they give the mind? do they not dispose us to make trial of his loving kindness, and to put our trust under the shadow of his wings?---This leads me

Secondly.---To urge the *invitation* of the Psalmist. *O taste and see that the Lord is good.* Let me persuade you to commit your ways to him, and to put yourselves under his protection and care. Need I observe to this audience, who are favoured with a clear discovery of the terms of salvation, and the condition of every divine blessing; that this confidence in God, this gladdening experience of his mercy, is not the privilege of all men without exception; not of all who may make their boasts, and venture to lay a claim to it. The Psalmist himself, in a few verses after the text, has guarded his encomiums on the happiness of a devout dependent on God from every abuse, by a most awful declaration. *The face of the Lord* (says he, in contrast to the happiness of the righteous) *is against them that do evil.* And as he invites us to taste the goodness of God, he has also pointed out the paths which are brightened with the smiles, and crowned with the blessings of the Almighty.

Almighty. *Come ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord: keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile: depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.* On these declarations of divine truth we assert; that when the heart is corrupted with vicious affections, and the life stained with sinful habits, to talk of our experience of the divine goodness without repenting, is vile hypocrisy; and without forsaking our evil ways and thoughts to trust in GOD, is daring and dangerous presumption. *To them who order their conversation aright, will the salvation of GOD be shewn.* Every impenitent sinner acts *against GOD*: how extremely insolent and profane is it for such to rely on the protection of this almighty and holy Sovereign. Lay then, Sirs! deep repentance of heart and life, at the foundation of all your future trials of the divine goodness and care. Here begin to form and raise the habits of entire resignation and chearful trust, in his protection and government.---Your condition is such as needs this stay; as calls for all the consolations divine confidence can inspire, and wants all the blessings it can yield. Infancy is helpless: youth is giddy: manhood

hood is short sighted : and age infirm. Our capacities are limited ; our progress in knowledge is slow ; our enquiries are pursued under great prejudices and disadvantages : and many things lie beyond the ken of our search. Numerous are the evils, against which we cannot by any caution or prudence provide : numerous are the calamities, which unassisted, we cannot support. Beauty fades ; sickness impairs our strength ; years enfeeble ; riches are not proof against time and chance ; men deceive ; our worthiest friends die and leave us. Our reason may fail us, or our health forsake us : it may be the interest of men to injure us ; or poverty may render us forlorn and destitute. Through negligence and false views, our duty is not known, or is forgotten : sinful actions load the soul with guilt, and debate and pollute its heavenly powers : the maxims of the world pervert the judgment ; and the influence of example seduces the heart. Temptations assault with violence, and every stage of life is exposed to them. We feel our condition to be indigent, liable to perpetual wants, and perpetual fears. And the constitution and frame of the world around us, is uncertain and precarious : our expectations

peccations fail, and our joys desert us; besides this, it is not the least affecting proof of the weakness and necessities of human nature; that death follows in the rear. Its stroke cannot be evaded; but its approach is uncertain; its message is to be feared, and its consequences are awful.---Eternal thanks to the Father of Mercy, amidst all these disadvantages and calamities, we know that his goodness is a constant, supreme and universal source of help, comfort and strength. What wants so pressing, which it cannot relieve? what difficulties so great, out of which it cannot extricate us? what desires so large, it cannot satisfy? what blessings too rich and valuable for infinite benevolence to bestow? It will assist us to conquer even death.---Need I then be importunate with you, to secure his divine and gracious protection? You feel your own indigence: you believe the all-sufficiency and grace of G O D. Your own hearts surely with this conviction, and this encouraging faith, make the application. *O taste and see that the Lord is good.* This friendly advice of the Psalmist, is the dictate of prudence; your necessities urge, as your happiness invites, a submission to it. Do not, I beseech you,

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resist

resist the call ; embrace the offers of GOD's care with thankfulness, and experience for yourselves ; how blessed is the man that trusteth in him.

You have now heard an humble attempt to illustrate and prove the happiness of this man, from the very *nature* of his *character* and *situation*. But dear Sirs, I have in my thoughts, and have lately had before my eyes, a more affecting, and a more *sensible proof and instance* of the happiness of an humble dependent on GOD's providence and care. Our deceased friend trusted in the Lord, and ~~he~~ was in the number of those ; who are blest in the consolations of this divine trust. He felt and exemplified the power of godliness : his regard for its forms was serious and regular. He was, notwithstanding the temptations and snares of early life, remarkable for sobriety of manners, and for integrity, diligence, and fidelity in the dispatch of business. His conduct secured him the confidence and respect of all those with whom he had formed any connections ; a proof, that his pretensions to piety were as sincere and influential ; as they were eminent. He did indeed serve GOD and JESUS CHRIST ; and he felt much, very much of the hopes and
satisfactions

satisfactions of religion and the gospel. Through a long and tedious sickness, he very frequently expressed the strongest persuasion of, and breathed forth his gratitude for the goodness of GOD. The goodness of GOD was his repeated and constant theme. This very sickness, painful and lingering as it was; he devoutly regarded ~~to be~~^{as} one single instance of GOD's goodness to him, one of the greatest mercies of his life.-----He had made it the business of his active days to secure his reconciliation with GOD: the approach of death brought no terrors with it. He expected his death: he wished for it, and talked of it with longing desires, and ardent, joyful hopes: he considered it, and spoke of it in this engaging and gladdening view, of going into the company and presence of his GOD and Redeemer. The acknowledgments of devout gratitude were the last accents his dying lips pronounced. In his expiring moments, when his weak frame had been torn with dissolving pangs.——“ I cannot be thankful enough to GOD”——said he, and breathed his last.

Knowing that the hour was coming, when he could not with his own voice

say any thing more for G O D : he was desirous of engaging the assistance of mine, which might also reach farther. He requested that his death might be improved as an occasion for addressing you on the goodness of G O D , and the happiness of those who trust in him. He was solicitous to leave with us his dying testimony, to the excellency and importance of a godly virtuous life, to the pleasures of such a course, and to the happiness of those in particular, who in early years make G O D their portion.——The dear pious young man, whose remains are there * enclosed, being dead, yet speaketh : speaketh to you these cheering words, “ *O taste and see that the Lord is good : blessed is the man that trusteth in him.* ”

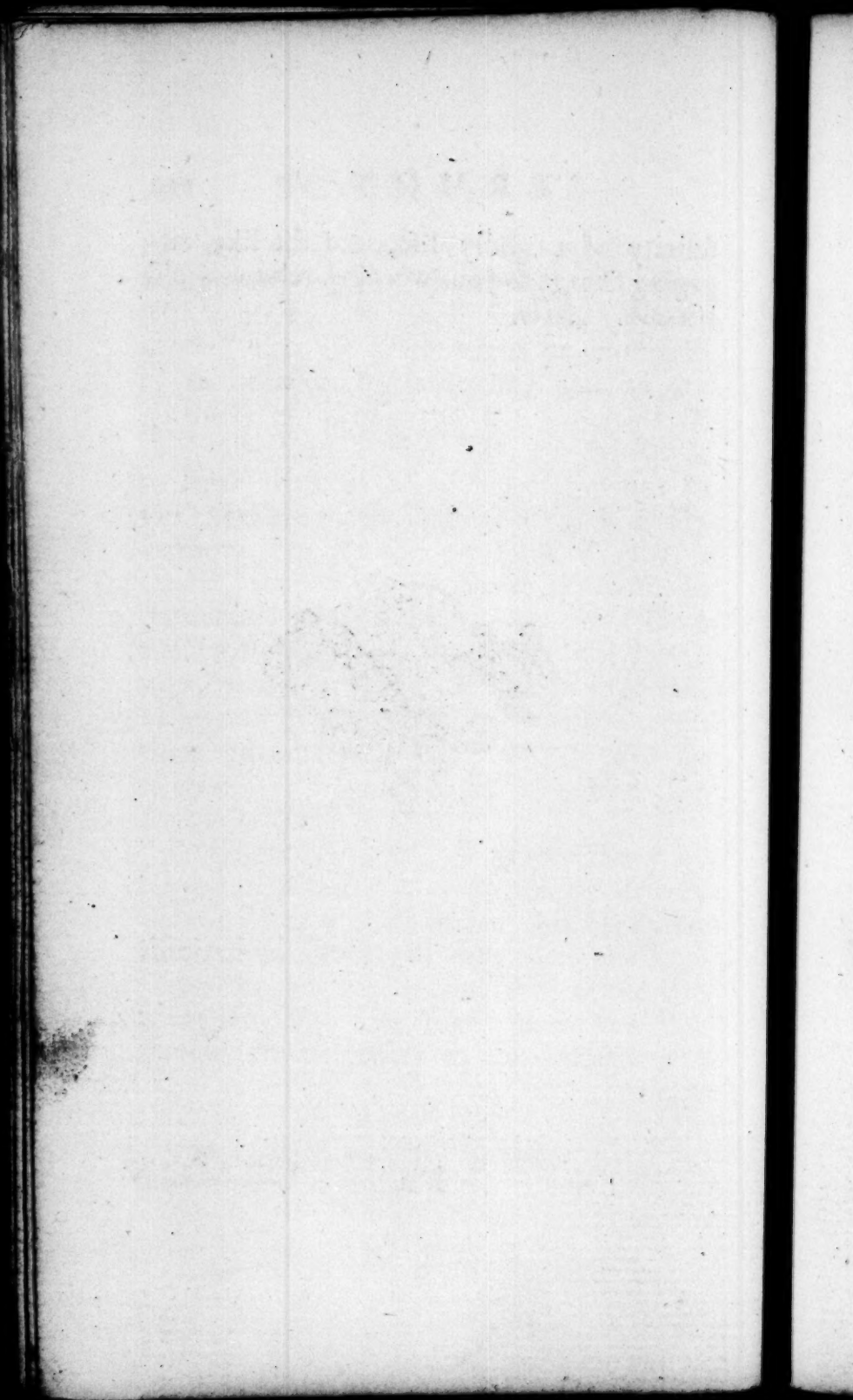
May the G O D of all grace give you, my young friends ; may he give us all ears to hear ; and a heart to feel this his dying admonition : that you may share the happiness he enjoyed ; and that when you come to die, you may leave the like honourable testimony to the wisdom and
felicity

* The corpse was rested in the Meeting during the time of service.

S E R M O N V. 119

felicity of a godly life, and the like engaging charge to your weeping relations and friends. *Amen.*







S E R M O N VI.

The GROUNDS *and* REASONABLENESS
of a LIFE *of* FAITH.



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2 COR. Ch. v. 7.

For we walk by faith, not by sight.

VARIOUS are the springs of conduct that belong to the human frame. Our earliest, strongest, and most constant incentives to love or hatred; to fear or hope, are the impressions we receive from the sensible objects around us. But it is the use and business of reason, to correct and regulate the animal sensations. And it is by thought and reflection the great truths, that concern us as creatures formed for pious virtue, and accountable to the Judge of the earth, are made present to the mind, and gain any power. For as to these truths, such is the imperfection and disadvantage of the present state; we are governed and influenced not by the sight of them, but by *faith*, or the persuasion of our minds. The Great God, who is the Parent and LORD of the universe, no man hath seen or can see. JESUS CHRIST, the mediator and patron of our spiritual and
eternal

eternal interests, though he once tabernacled in flesh, and conversed with man, is now withdrawn from our world. The grand trial we are all to take, is a distant and future event; it has been the expectation of many ages past, and ages are yet to revolve before its commencement. The world in which we are hereafter to live, its inhabitants, its dignities, its joys are unknown; not seen nor felt. There is no clear discernment, no sensible experience, no ocular proof of these objects.---Yet the Christian treats them as the most solemn realities; and lives as if he saw these invisible things. *We walk* (says the Apostle) *by faith, and not by sight*: i. e. We regulate our conduct not by the enjoyment of the visible things of this world, but by the faith and expectation of the other and future world. We fear an invisible God. We love a SAVIOUR, whom we have not seen. We firmly expect a judgment to come. And we are ambitious to obtain the glory and happiness of the unseen world. By these objects, and not by those of sense and sight, are our choice, our tempers, and our lives governed. We are strongly persuaded of their reality, and we are fully assured of their importance; and there is nothing

nothing we regard so much. This short, plain, and comprehensive account, does the Apostle give us of the swaying and general principle of a Christian life : it is faith in opposition to sight and enjoyment.

There is scarcely an office more important, or more suited to help and animate your faith and joy, than to lay before you Christians those considerations which show the propriety and reasonableness of your conduct. There is *no absurdity in supposing those things to be real and certain*, which are to us invisible and future.---There is a *variety of clear and strong proofs*, on which to build your faith of things you do not see.—There is a vast, an *infinite moment* in them, if they are true.—And to walk by faith in them has *the best tendency* to improve your lives and your happiness. I would wish to argue these points with clearness and strength ; as one who would gladly assist you to learn to feel and remember ; wherein your great duty and truest wisdom lies.

First.---There is *no absurdity* in supposing those things to be real and certain, which are to us invisible and future. If nothing in our judgments and belief was allowed an existence, but of which we ourselves, or those with whom we converse, had ocular
and

and sensible proofs, into what narrow bounds should we bring the world itself; and in our conceptions how vastly should we diminish the number of beings who have life, and the number of inanimate objects. Our faculties are limited; our sphere and opportunities of knowledge are more limited. A very small part of nature falls under our notice. We can conceive of beings with whom no human converse was held, and of places far remote from the human step and eye. Nay, we have no doubt of the existence and reality of innumerable things, and parts in the universe, which are and for ever must remain out of sight. Though therefore the objects of religious faith are unseen and distant; there is nothing in this circumstance merely, that renders the supposition of their reality absurd. And there is not any contradiction, or impossibility in the things themselves. It is no more absurd to suppose that there is a God, the wise and powerful architect of the world; than that the houses we inhabit were raised by some skilful builders; though they themselves have been long since removed out of life, and their names are forgotten. There is no more absurdity in supposing that there is a being infinitely
above

above us in perfection and dominion; than that there are creatures below us so mean and inconsiderable, as not to be visible to the naked eye. There is no more absurdity in supposing the reality of a great and good personage, to whom the government of all nature is committed; than that in former times, or in the present, one man should have a dominion and authority over multitudes for their good, though the person of majesty is visible to very few of those over whom he rules. There is no more absurdity in supposing that we shall live again, and that life shall be lengthened out through eternal ages; then that we should be born into this world, and should rise from infancy to manhood, though a few years back we were not. A future judgment at the bar of GOD, is as consistent and rational a transaction, as a judgment and trial now at the tribunal of men.---So far from there being any absurdity in supposing these things as real, as those we now see: the present constitution, present and visible objects, are *samples* and *pledges* of things invisible. Our great superiority over the mite and the worm, bears some resemblance to the infinite superiority of GOD over us. The foresight and care of man is a pattern
of

of the foresight and providence of the deity. The government one man exercises over another, and the benefits one man is the means of conveying to another, afford an emblem of the more perfect, gracious, and invisible mediation and authority of CHRIST over us all. 'This life contains only the seeds and first principles of a life to be renewed beyond the grave ; the present is the embryo of our future existence. The trial and judgment of our actions, which now takes place in each man's conscience, and which is more publickly executed by magistrates, is an anticipation of a more exact, universal, and decisive judgment hereafter. The former things render our conceptions of the latter easy, and their reality probable. The *latter* is only *the same constitution*, more completely and perfectly carried on, displayed in a more extensive and illustrious manner. We find that the objects of sense itself are admitted into the mind by degrees ; our acquaintance with them is gradual, and advancing from the first, the very few and weak notices we receive in infancy to new objects, new sensations, and new improvements every day. Why then should it weaken our faith, and weaken the force of its objects on our practice,

tice; that the plan of the universe is not at once laid open before us, and all orders and ranks of beings, are not at once visible to our sight. We consider not, that if the objects of faith were brought within the verge of sense, they would have such a powerful striking and overbearing power, as to exclude all virtue from our actions; there could be no reasoning upon them, no choice in regard to them.---We consider not, that to *disbelieve* the reality of these things, must involve us in the greatest contradictions and absurdities. To believe, that whilst every house has a builder, there is no one who built all things. To believe that no woman can forget her sucking child, and no father can be indifferent to the wants of his children: yet that the parent of the world neglects the creatures he has made; and he that formed us, shows no favour. To believe in a God who cannot want wisdom, power or goodness, being the source of all; and yet to suppose that he exercises no care, no government over us. To believe that he governs us, yet does not observe our actions; or that observing our actions, he does not approve the good, and disapprove the evil, so as to punish the later, and recompence the

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former.

former.—This is absurd : this is repugnant to every principle of reason, and every dictate of common sense : a contradiction to all the apprehensions of our own minds : a contradiction to the general principles and reason of all men, and of all ages. So void, so entirely void of all absurdity is it, to suppose the things of another state, which we do not see, to be real and certain. And since these things may be as we apprehend ; so

Secondly.—There is a *great variety of clear and strong proofs*, on which to build our faith in the invisible and future realities of another world. It further serves to set forth the wisdom and reasonableness of a life governed by faith ; not only that there is nothing impossible, nothing absurd in it : but that this faith is merely opposed to sense and enjoyment, not to reason and judgment. No ! faith is the submission of the mind to evidence, and the triumph of reason, over the impressions and prejudices of sight. A judicious faith, is the result of enquiry, of attention to argument and proof. The grand and leading principles of a religious persuasion and hope, are founded on the most evident and obvious truths. The invisible things of
him,

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him, from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made. Not only the wonders of our own frame, the curious formation of our bodies, and the nobler powers of the soul ; but the least insect that moves, and every spire of grass, produces the acknowledgment of a first cause, an Almighty Author of all things. Though we see not God himself, we behold his works, and discern the marks of infinite power, wisdom and goodness, in the heavens above, in the world around us, and in ourselves. Though at the close of life we do not see our fellow creatures summoned to the tribunal of the Universal Judge, and taking their trial for eternity : yet the difference between good and evil, between virtue and vice, is as plain as the difference between light and darkness, sweet and bitter ; we are capable of choosing the one, and refusing the other ; in innumerable instances, in the constitution of things, we have the evidence of sight and experience, that the tendency of goodness, is to happiness, and of sin to misery ; the practice of virtue is indeed always attended with self-approbation and hope ; the practice of sin is followed with remorse and fear. This has all the appearance of our

being accountable creatures. We are framed, as if we should undergo the scrutiny of the Divine Judgment. And therefore, though we do not see the other world, and the bar of GOD, we see and feel *what is necessarily previous thereto*; we see and feel the *preparations* for a future judgment and state: hence on the evidences arising from our own consciousness, and the nature of this world, we firmly expect to give an account of ourselves to GOD, and to receive according to our deeds.---These objects of faith are set in a fuller, clearer, and more striking light by the gospel. *That* teaches us the sublimest truths relative to the Maker of the world. *That* makes the plainest, most animating and engaging discoveries of another life. *That* opens to our gladdening contemplation, the schemes and plan of the Divine Government, the designs of infinite benevolence for the salvation of man, through all ages, from the beginning of the world. *That* reveals to us the character of JESUS CHRIST, brings us into a new relation, and leads us to a new set of duties, arising from the mediation and government of CHRIST JESUS. And if the excellency of the discoveries, the reasonableness of the instructions, and the dignity

nity of the themes ; if their correspondence to the perfections of God, and the state of man ; if the amiable lustre, they reflect on the character of God, and the light and joy they diffuse amongst a guilty and degenerate race : if the divine life of the author of our religion ; if the purifying and ennobling tendency of his doctrine ; if the number, greatness, and variety of the works wrought by CHRIST and his apostles ; if the resurrection of our friend and law-giver from the dead ; if his ascension to heaven ; if the grant and effusion of supernatural gifts and endowments, on the ministers of his religion, from himself in his exalted state ; if the testimony of twelve plain, honest and benevolent men, who gave up their own prejudices, views and gain ; who met poverty, disgrace, torture and death, in attesting the grand facts of the Christian scheme ; if the efficacy and success of the gospel, in the change of the religion, and the lives of men ; if the faith of history and the testimony of succeeding, corroborating that of former ages.---If any one of these arguments has any weight and force in it ; and especially, if when united together, and all lending their separate authority, they

form an harmony and sympathy of proofs, truly striking for their number, their agreement and their strength.-----Then it is not without evidence that we walk by faith. A persuasion of such truths so supported is wise and rational.-- Particularly when it is considered,

Thirdly.----That there is a *vast, an infinite moment* in the objects of our faith.. Amidst the variety of objects that court our notice and attention, wisdom and reason require us to suit our regards to their respective nature and excellencies. Indeed, were the things of this world and of sense to be valued and pursued no farther than their own intrinsic worth and duration would justify; but few thoughts, but a little care would be bestowed on them by a rational and immortal creature: and the neglect would be highly injurious to our present condition. The wise author of our frame, the Almighty Maker of the world has so established the present constitution of things; that how deficient soever in real excellency sensible objects may appear to the judgment of a rational being: they strike on our minds so early, so continually accost us, enter in at so many avenues, leave such strong impressions, and are so interwoven
with

with all the circumstances of our existence, and all the exigences of our state, that a total disregard of them is not less impossible : than, if practicable, it would be high and bitter folly. They may ; they must be minded. But amidst all our connections in this world, amidst all our cares for this life and the body : let it be ever remembered, that we have souls and are connected with nobler objects. There is a native worth, a solid supreme, and lasting value belonging to the invisible realities of a future state. We may appeal to you, Christians ; we may lodge the appeal with every man, who will turn a sober thought to the subject, amidst the vast multitude of beings that inhabit universal space ; is there any one, that can be likened unto GOD, or compared with the most high ? Amidst all the kind agents under God, who are the ministers of good to us ; amidst all the long roll of benefactors and friends to mankind, whose names adorn the pages of history, can a *superior*, can an *equal* be found to JESUS CHRIST, for the purity of his character, for the sublimity of his instructions, for his generous services, for his large benefits, for his exalted dignity and universal empire ? He tenders the offer, he

has secured the blessings of wisdom for the ignorant, of strength for the weak, of pardon for the guilty, and of life and immortality for the dying. To whom are we so much indebted? Whose name is good and glorious, like his?----And as to the *hopes and prospects*, faith opens before us. How *great* ~~gracious~~ and important! You are called to seek, and are encouraged to piety and virtue by the promise of all the dignity and bliss, your hearts can desire, or God can give in a more perfect and durable state of existence. A judgment, from which there lies no appeal; a judgment, which will reach to our words and thoughts as well as actions; where you cannot effect an escape, nor offer a bribe; where angels and men will be witnesses of our acquittal or disgrace; a judgment, which will decide our state and character for *eternity*: eternal death, or an eternal heaven of glory and bliss; these objects, if any thing is solemn and weighty, these things are of *infinite* moment to us! and was the evidence for them much less than it is: yet they are so great in themselves, so much depends upon the belief of them; if they should prove true. ---It would be a point of wisdom and prudence even on slender, and less probable proofs

proofs to pay a serious regard to them. Their own weight would be sufficient to make up a defect of evidence. What influence then ought they to have upon us ; when both the evidences for them are so numerous and strong : and their importance so great and eternal ? Let nothing, Christians, move you away from so high an hope : let nothing betray you into a forgetfulness of so vast a concern.

Fourthly.----This walking by faith, has the *best aspect on our conduct and our happiness*. Knowledge, fortitude, prudence, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and universal charity, are the amiable, useful and divine habits ; which the principles of faith raise and establish. Do you believe in GOD ? You will own ; faith directs, obliges and encourages you to be holy as he is holy, to be merciful as he is merciful, and as dear children to form your temper and life after the perfections of the deity, the most lovely and perfect model of goodness and purity. Do you believe in the *final Judge* of the world ; who without respect of persons will judge every man according to his works ? what manner of persons ought you to be in all holy conversation and godliness : this is the conclusion
from

from such a principle faith draws and fixes in the heart? do you believe in the *son of GOD*? This faith teaches and engages you to keep his commandments, to open your bosoms to the power of those grateful generous sentiments, his dying friendship inspires; and to maintain your integrity, purity and holiness to the end, fired by the prospect of that immortal crown, he will appear from heaven to bestow.---Read the lives of the Patriarchs, the Apostles and Martyrs. Turn to the history of Abraham, of Joseph, of Daniel, of Moses, and of *JESUS CHRIST*, that illustrious pattern and leader on to the exercise and reward of faith.---Or examine, Sirs! your own lives, and survey your own actions; and say, how useful, how important you have found the influence of faith. In your own experience, when the principles of faith are active and vigorous, steadily kept in view and firmly embraced; to what innocence, integrity and universal propriety and dignity of behaviour, does it guide and animate the man? when faith is lively; the cares of life grow easy; its temptations loose their power to charm, or to terrify. For the prospects of the believer in *God and Christ* are wide and extensive: his desires pure and sublime;

sublime ; his hopes warm and bright : his resolutions bold and strong. He views all things in their connection with futurity : he converses with the celestial world : beholds the deity as ever present, as always nigh to approve, befriend, and bless him : and he is transported into eternity itself,---- The happiness that flows from faith is pure and solid. To be kept from fluctuating amidst all the uncertainties of life ; not to be subject to the power of vain hopes and joys, and fears and sorrows no less vain : to meet the afflictions of life with fortitude, to improve its satisfactions with gratitude, and to enjoy them with moderation ; this is the happiness that prevails : where faith prevails. And thine, O ! divine principle, are the joys of a devout attachment to GOD the best of all beings, and to JESUS CHRIST the kind and powerful *Saviour* ; the joys of devout confidence and of good hopes beyond the grave : the joys of a triumph over death and of an everlasting recompence ; these joys and pleasures are thine. With these joys are all the toils of faith soothed and its labours repayed : till a better and happier world will renders its satisfactions perfect, and its consequences eternal !

So reasonable are the principles of faith ; so great the evidences of their reality ; so vast their importance. So valuable and so happy their influence ; let us walk by faith and not by sight.----When the being of a GOD, when the gospel and a judgment to come are proved to be chimæras and fables, matters of no weight in themselves and of no consequence to you : *then*, Christians, you may change the motives of your conduct, and let this world be your only care, with reason and safety. But since things are so ; are as they have been now represented, follow not a multitude in the impiety, ingratitude and folly of treating these things with indifference and contempt. The foundations of religion are laid too deep in the nature of things, and in the constitution of human nature to be overturned by a witty argument and profane jest. The importance of the objects of our faith is too great and real to be diminished by the example of those ; who are so inconsiderate, or so daring as to forget and despise them. ‘ My dependence on ‘ GOD, my interest in the salvation of the ‘ gospel, my accountableness at the tribunal of GOD, and my concern in the consequences of that trial is the same, is infinite

‘finite to *me*: though the many or the
‘great may treat those things as nothing
‘to *them*. It is only the want of evidence,
‘or the want of importance can excuse my
‘neglect of them. It will only expose my
‘folly and endanger my happiness, if the
‘example of others weighs more with
‘me; than the reason of things, the force
‘of argument, and the concerns of an
‘eternal state.’

Whatever others do, let us walk by
faith. To assist and invigorate our faith,
let us frequently retire and meditate on
the wondrous scenes faith displays before
us. “Every Christian has another
world to which he belongs, and in which
he should live and converse, besides this
which he is born into, and shares with
the rest of mankind. In this world he
should often step aside: it is not at such a
distance from him, but he can do it in a
moment by only forgetting the world
about him, and strongly turning the eye
of his mind inward. Here let the
thoughts dwell for a time; pass with de-
light from one object to another: Now
entertaining himself with the perfection
of God; now with the virtues and of-
fices of the Redeemer, his past suffer-
ings,

ings, his present glory ; now with the privileges of good men in this life, then with their happiness in the life to come ; now with one doctrine of Christianity, then with another, and some time with the certainty and divine excellence of the whole." * Let these themes employ some of our thoughts every day. But particularly let us be so wise, as to seize the leisure and composure of the Lord's day, to think more deeply on them in private, to enlarge our acquaintance with them by reading, and to improve the opportunity hereby afforded us, if not to be informed, yet to *be reminded* ourselves, and to remind others of their certainty and importance by a serious attendance on the public instructions and devotions of the day. Above all, let us consider what ought to be the conversation of those, who believe in the gracious and Almighty Maker of the world, in the truth of the gospel, and in a judgment to come. Such, so pure and devout, so good and sober let our lives and tempers be every day, and all the day long. Let the laws of GOD and of the eternal world be our constant guide.

Thus, my friends, fight the good fight of faith :

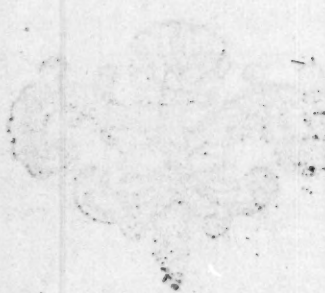
* Mr. Grove.

faith: finish your course with integrity and joy. And the glorious, immortal prize is yours. It is now yours by the near prospect of it. Soon, soon as the tale of human life is told, it will be yours by possession; by a certain, triumphant and eternal possession. *Amen.*



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S E R M O N VII.

The INFLUENCE *of* HABITUAL PIETY.



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PROV. Ch. xxiii. 17.

But be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long.

BY *the fear of GOD* is meant that affectionate grateful reverence ; with which the mind of man ought to be possessed towards the Almighty Creator, the unfailing friend, the constant inspector and Supreme Judge of the world, and particularly of all rational creatures. If we bestow any serious reflection on the character and perfections of the Almighty ; and recollect the rich and numerous favours, he is continually imparting : favours which every one shares according to his capacity, to improve and enjoy them : none can dispute his claims to the thankful adoration of every mind, formed to know and adore the author of its bliss. Nay, considering our constant connection with the deity, and his intimate knowledge of all our ways, this principle of devout fear and grateful reve-

rence, ought to be the leading and perpetual affection of the soul, the first commanding and grand motive of our whole behaviour : as it is the most effectual restrain from every crime, the animating incentive to every instance of virtue, and a chearing support under every evil. This is what the wise man means by the exhortation to *be in the fear of the Lord all the day long*. But this is so important a subject, so important to the power and credit, and comfort of religion ; it is not to be dismissed with a few general hints, but deserves a distinct illustration. And the words of the text give us a hint to dwell on this part of a religious character, namely, its constant and daily influence on every rising event and circumstance of the day. Religion should show itself not only in the *devotions*, but in the *business and recreations* of the day : under the *providential events* of the succeeding hours of life, should it exert itself ; and in the *moments of our solitude* be our attendant. In every one of these respects should a daily piety be exemplified : and it is our design at present, to point out what effects religion should have on each.

And

And would to God, that whilst we pass thro' these particulars, each of us may be able to say from delightful experience, blessed be the great object of my fear in this, and in this respect, I have felt the power of genuine religion !---Or may this discourse be succeeded by thy gracious operations, O father of our spirits, to beget and improve the sentiments and power of an habitual piety. *Amen !*

First.—In the *devotions* of the day, will that fear of the LORD, in which we are to be found all the day long, exert itself. Without a deep and lively sense of God upon the mind, the services of piety will either be entirely neglected, or discharged with remissness and langour. For then the obligations, incentives and encouragements to the duties of devotion, are out of sight : they are scarcely attended to, or very slightly affect us. On the contrary, let us open our bosoms to the impressions of reverence and gratitude towards God, these affections will prompt us to approach his throne with diligence and fervour. The fear of God will naturally produce a serious concern for his protection, and a dread of his displeasure : whilst our daily experience of his goodness will ani-

mate the hope of the former, and a persuasion of his mercy will sweetly attemper the latter. The fear of GOD establisshes such a turn and bias of heart, as is an habitual preparation for the duties of devotion ; and it forms that calmness of temper, which greatly assists the soul, to compose and recollect itself at the stated, or occasional seasons of divine worship. And in nothing will it discover its influence more, than in the manner of discharging the offices of piety : it will supply a variety of considerations to awaken every devout affection, to beget reverence and ardor. Our many and urgent necessities, our guilt and weakness, the numerous favours and blessings of which GOD is the source, and the noble hopes of immortality he can satisfy ; these both furnish materials for devotion, and excite us to offer our praises heartily, and our prayers with earnestness. But no thought can yield us a superior motive to holy care in the service of GOD, or more powerfully awaken us to guard against hypocritical formality, than this just solemn thought, —a thought not less obvious than weighty : namely, that in every office of devotion, we address ourselves to the great Majesty of heaven and earth, who knows all our thoughts,

thoughts, and beholds all our actions : and that we are in the immediate presence of this adorable being, who is very jealous of his honour.. Would we my friends, be in and feel the fear of GOD in divine worship, whether public or domestic ; let a moment be seized before we enter on such solemnities, to admit this reflection : it will have an happy and strong influence to render our devotions such, as we may on a review approve, and such as GOD will accept. Let this, the acceptance of GOD, be the great object of our wishes ; as it can be the only fit and consistent aim of our devotions. Hereby will our watchfulness and care be excited, not solely to the reverence of our manner, and the sincerity of our hearts, but to the sentiments and expressions we introduce in our prayers and praises : that they be such as may promote the reverence, esteem, and gratitude due to the Deity, amongst men. To this purpose we must endeavour to gain right and just notions of the deity, of religious virtue, and of happiness ; for these give a tincture to our requests, and form the language of prayer. —In a word, the very disposition to the duties of divine worship, proceeds from the grateful fear of GOD dwelling in the bo-

som. And to secure the benefits and blessings of which devotion is the means, the fear of GOD will induce us to enter upon them with a serious pause, and with a turn of the thoughts to GOD, in pious breathing after his help and acceptance : it will induce us to set a guard on our spirits, and to check the first wanderings, when engaged in these duties ; and to review them immediately, when concluded, and reflect whether we have worshipp'd him in that spirit and truth he demands. But,

Secondly.---To be governed by religion in *the business* of the day, is another thing implied by being in the fear of the LORD all the day long. It is highly absurd, nay, mischievous to lose sight of GOD through the avocations of life, and the hurry of its concerns : since the interests of this world are not repugnant to the services of GOD ; but one may be rendered subservient to the other. . . The sentiments and hopes of religion are needful to moderate the pursuit of earthly gain, and to sooth the cares of active life. Nay, scarcely any thing, not even the prospect of increasing wealth, can inspire that vigour, animate to that diligence, and administer that pleasure in the prosecution of our business, whether the labours

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labours of the hand, or of learned life, which genuine and habitual religion will produce. Religion does in some measure spiritualize and ennoble the common and lowest labours of life. For it leads us to regard the Almighty, as the author of that manly firmness, which fits the husbandman for his toils ; of that ingenuity and skill, which has so variously multiplied its effects in the workmanship of the artificer ; of that rich abundance of materials for industry and labour, the earth pours forth from all its store-houses ; and of that success and wealth, with which the toils of the field and of the shop are repayed. Listen to the calm voice, and rational dictates of religion ; the author of all is divine. Religion teaches you, Christians, to regard your several situations in life, whether those of superior, or lower rank, as the allotments of his providence, and the stations to which his wisdom has appointed you. *The rich and poor meet together, but the Lord is the maker of them all.* The time of life, which is the season of activity and vigour, is in his hands ; and at his pleasure is abridged and lengthened out. The different businesses and occupations of life give scope for the exertion of that strength, to
which

which the power of GOD has formed the body, and for the display of that understanding, with which the inspiration of the Almighty has endowed the spirit. By them are men provided with the means of generosity and kindness; with the means of enjoying life in decency or elegance; with the materials of grateful offerings to the glory of GOD. In so many important and sacred views, does religion place our worldly business.——And it moreover, expressly gives us lessons of diligence, and application to it. *Ye are taught of GOD* (observes an Apostle) *that you study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands; that you may walk honestly towards them that are without, and that you may have lack of nothing.* And in this manner therefore does he address himself to the idle: *We hear that there are some among you, who walk disorderly, working not at all, but are busy bodies: now them that are such, we command and exhort by our LORD JESUS CHRIST; that with quietness they work and eat their own bread.* 2 Thess. Ch. iii. 11, 12. ---Feel we then the truth and power of these principles? do we wish to comport with the spirit and genius of real religion? we shall set to the prosecution of our worldly

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worldly business, with a sense of God's authority, and with a regard to his glory : avoiding that dreaming, sluggish, indolent temper, which nods over its work ; avoiding those snares and sensual indulgences which would rob us of our time, and unfit us for our employment, we shall apply to it with vigour and diligence. We shall manage it with truth and integrity, remembering that *the unjust weight and lying lips, are an abomination to the Lord.* We shall watch against its temptations, with humble caution, and with an holy fortitude resist them. We shall expend its profits with innocence and temperance, or consecrate them to benevolence and piety ; whilst we shall be habitually sensible of our need of the divine blessing, to prosper our labours. --- And as the busy, so the pleasing scenes of life are not to be exempted from the influence and guidance of religion. For that

Thirdly.---Our *recreations and amusements* be governed by the fear of God, is another thing implied by being therein all the day long. The fear of God, when it prevails with life and constancy, will almost continually present to our thoughts those sublime, serious, and awful truths ; which
will

will give a compofure and gravity to the mind: and without frequent recollection and calm thought, the fear of God cannot be produced or maintained. But this difpofition to think, to make frequent and ferious pauses in life, this turn of the mind to divine and heavenly objects, will give a relifh for folid and manly pleasures, and caufe us to look with indifference, if not contempt, on that round of empty and giddy diverfions: which bars out every worthy reflection, and enfeeble the vigour of the foul. When religious principles and hopes, to any degree delight and fway the heart, none but innocent diverfions will be chofen: and they will be indulged only fo far as the rules of prudence and moderation allow; may I not fay, only fo far as our fchemes for immortality, and our heavenly pleasures can bear. Amufement will not be with us that dull and empty thing it is with thofe, with whom it is their fole concern and employment. It will diverfify life, and whilft it foother our fatigues, it will afford us a recruit of fpirits and vigour, for a renewed application to the labours of life, or duties of religion. The readinefs with which the devout mind frequently turns to the great author of good, will not
be

be entirely lost in the hours of diversion. Our very recreations, our capacities to taste their enlivening joys, and the variety of objects which furnish out an agreeable relaxation from the wearisome scenes of busy life, these will be regarded as proofs of our Creator's goodness, as pledges of our heavenly Father's indulgence to the weakness of our frame, which cannot support a long and uninterrupted application to business and labour. That good intention, with which we seek them in subordination to the honour of God, and our usefulness in life, is a proper expression of our fear of the Almighty; and will even exalt them into the rank of services to him. A just concern not to offend the deity, will put us on our guard; that if our recreations are of a social nature, nothing in our temper or our words should appear; that is malignant, or envious, passionate, or unkind. It will put us on our watch, that nothing through our fault should convert, what a gracious God allows of, as a sweetener of life, and a cement of friendship into an occasion of bitterness, folly, or mischief. It may be added a reverence for the Almighty, and a prevailing desire of his favour, will so regulate our behaviour in the seasons of amusement

amusement and relaxation, their nature and length, that we may not be ashamed or afraid at the close and review of them, to implore his blessing on the use thereof, and gratefully to acknowledge his kindness in the diversions of life. This we may do, with a rational and warm devotion, if we ever remember “to indulge ourselves in amusements and diversions no farther, than as they make a part in a scheme of rational and manly, benevolent and pious conduct.”* To proceed,

Fourthly.---A devout notice of its *events and occurrences*, is another thing meant by being in the fear of the LORD all the day long. This appears to be evidently alluded to in the text. For as in the course of human affairs, we cannot fail to meet with many instances of prosperous wickedness, and of sinners rejoicing in an abundance of good; the wise man prescribes a constant and awful sense of God on the mind, as a preservative against envy of their success, or an imitation of their conduct, through the hope of securing the like. *Let not thy heart envy sinners, but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long.*---But this lively habitual sense of God, will not merely restrain from every thing malignant and

* Dr. Doddridge.

and sinful ; it will kindle the better and generous affections. For instance, do pleasing and agreeable events diffuse smiles and joys around us ; religion will fill the heart with devout gratitude, and open our mouths with songs of praise to the source of every good gift. The refreshment of sleep, the safety in which we pass the hours of darkness, the chearful appearance nature again resumes at the opening morning, the renewed exercise of our rational powers, the provision of warm and decent apparel, the prospects of usefulness and enjoyment, opening upon us, with the beginning of every day, and the hopes of that eternal day of happiness and glory, to which the days of our mortal life are introductory, these things must be all received and acknowledged, as effects of the divine wisdom and goodness.——The progress of the day will furnish new occasions of thankfulness, and exhibit new and successive proofs of God's not less gracious than awful presence and government, which a pious mind will see and feel. The light and warmth of the sun, the health that blooms in our cheeks, and braces our nerves, the provision that spreads our table, the children who fondly clasp our knees, the accommodations
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that endear our earthly dwelling, the friends whose kind and chearful looks gladden the soul, the books that entertain and improve us with their instructive pages, the journies that have been secured from alarming accidents, and painful disasters, our opportunities for exercising virtue, and for a growth in wisdom and goodness; these should be considered as constant and unfailing tokens of the divine care over us, and should fill us with grateful wonder to behold and taste in so many agreeable instances, how dear we are to our Maker!--Not but *afflictions* dark and gloomy scenes, show a present God. And it is the happiness, as well as a branch of a religious temper, to regard *them* as the corrections of his paternal rod, not the signs of his hatred, or neglect of us. Every disappointment, every loss, every pain, must be considered as having a useful part in that plan of education: by which our heavenly parent is training us up to wisdom and eternal life. There are some important graces, which afflictions are the most proper, if not the only means of calling into exercise and carrying to perfection. Mutual compassion, alms-giving, patience, and resignation, are the fruits of adversity; not to say, that distress and sorrow more sensibly

the value of our remaining mercies, and beget a lively relish for the blissful regions of immortality. And surely there can be no settled regard to God, but little devout respect to his will and government, where there is not a serious and daily care to cherish a temper, that may correspond to the rising events of life. Meekness under provocations from men, submission under calamities from the hand of God, under our losses, heavenly hopes and thankfulness for our mercies, is the most becoming and pious method of answering the purposes of the Divine Government, and of actually bringing about those great ends of moral improvement, and of final perfection and bliss, that are the aims of the Almighty's over-ruling wisdom and power.—To proceed

Lastly.----The pious direction of our *thoughts in our solitude*, is another thing implied by being in *the fear of the Lord all the day long*. "Thoughts (says Dr. Young, according to the usual boldness of his expression) are heard in heaven." It is certain on the plainest deductions of reason, and on the clearest declarations of scripture, that Almighty God *knoweth our down sitting, and uprising, and understandeth our*

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thoughts afar off ; that he compasseth our path, and our lying down, and is acquainted with all our ways. And it is equally certain, that nothing to a *good* mind can be more delightful ; to a *wicked* mind more awful ; and to *every one* more interesting and awakening, than this thought,----that God is the Inspector and Judge of our retirements, and of all the imaginations of the heart. In consequence of this solemn truth, another object of pious attention offers itself, namely, the management of our thoughts and affections in solitude. And when religion gives us the command of them, and quickens us to this instance of self-government, it affords a striking evidence of the strength and sincerity of our fear of God. It may be added, that on this the peace and purity of our own breast, the innocence, virtue and usefulness of our lives in a very considerable degree depend. *Keep thy heart with all diligence,* advises the royal preacher ; for, as he subjoins, *out of the heart are the issues of life.*----Let it then be our endeavour to *think*, as becomes those who fear the Lord. Such will not admit and harbour any unkind sentiments of others, any impure ideas, any fraudulent schemes, or any imaginations of
vanity

vanity and pride : but they will invite and entertain, embrace and pursue those thoughts, that will raise their pious and enlarge their benevolent affections. Sometimes their solitude will be improved into a sacred season of devout converse with God ; now they will range through the spacious field of divine knowledge and truth : and now on the wings of contemplation and faith, they will soar on high, and traverse the regions of purity, light and bliss. At other times they will call their actions and life to the tribunal of conscience, examine the witnesses, wait the verdict, and submit to the sentence. Now they devise liberal things, or again form the purposes of pious virtue, or lay some scheme of usefulness and service. And when the desultory wandering mind hastens from one subject of reflection to another, without dwelling long enough on any to derive pleasure, or profit from it ; the last Sermon they have heard, or the last portion of scripture they have read, shall be recollected to lend its assistance to the improvement of the solitary moments, and to fix the attention on some agreeable and edifying theme. This reminds me of the direction of the excellent Dr. Doddridge to a friend on this

point. It is, “ to select some one verse of
 “ scripture which he had met with in the
 “ morning, and to treasure it up in his
 “ mind, resolving to think on that at any
 “ time when he should be at a loss for
 “ matter of pious reflection in any inter-
 “ vals of leisure for entering upon it. This
 “ (he observes) will be often as a spring;
 “ from whence many profitable and de-
 “ lightful thoughts will arise; which per-
 “ haps we did not see before in that con-
 “ nection and force. Or, if it should not
 “ be so; yet I am persuaded it will be
 “ much better to repeat the same scripture
 “ in our minds an hundred times in a day
 “ with some pious ejaculation formed upon
 “ it; than to leave our thoughts at the
 “ mercy of all those various trifles, which
 “ may otherwise intrude upon us: the va-
 “ riety of which will be far from making
 “ amends for their vanity.”*

This seems to be the manner of spending
 each day intimated in the text: or these
 things may be very properly included under
 the exhortation, *to be in the fear of the Lord*
all the day long. Religion must accompany
 us through all the occurrences of the day.
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Our devotions, our business, our recreations, the providences of the day and the moments of solitude, must all feel its energy.

Thus, my dear friends, thus be it our aim to spend our days. This habitual regard to GOD, to his authority and acceptance in every circumstance, must be meant by the expressions of *walking with God, of setting the Lord always before us, and especially by that, of loving the Lord our God with all our heart, and soul, and mind, and strength.*---

Much might be said to urge and recommend it. The constant inspection and presence of his pure and infinite Majesty; his constant friendly regard to us, a condescending regard for our welfare, that runs through every day and every moment of life, doubtless demand of us a daily and hourly regard to his will and favour.-----

But, Christians, it must be left to you to feel these obligations, and to make the happy experiment of their pleasure and benefit.

O taste and see that the ways of the Lord are good: this course will conduce to the comfort and usefulness of life. Pursue it with increasing care and vigour; yours, you will find, are the joys of benevolence and gratitude---Yours, afflictions

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soothed with the richest consolations-----
Yours, the charms of an attractive model
of pious virtue---Yours, the pleasures of an
approving conscience, and an approving
GOD.---These delights and advantages will
be concluded with the serene dignity and
calm joys of peace and hope in death-----
and will be succeeded by the delights and
glories of a blissful eternity! *Amen.*





S E R M O N VIII.

The P L E A S *for*
Neglecting P U B L I C W O R S H I P *considered.*



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NEHEMIAH. Ch. xiii. 11. Middle Clause,

--*Why is the House of GOD forsaken?*--

WHEN the relation of the Deity to us as the sole author, proprietor and governor of all things in heaven and earth, is considered; the worship of this benevolent and glorious Majesty, evidently appears to be the just tribute of our homage and gratitude. When our constant and absolute dependence upon him is considered, as the great Preserver of the world, by whose power our being is supported; and as its liberal benefactor, by whose munificence our wants are supplied; to implore his protection, and by humble addresses to seek the benefits, of which he is the inexhaustible fountain, is plainly rational and fit. When it is considered of what use and advantage it must be to have the faith and knowledge of so great, benevolent and holy a power maintained and diffused, the acts of contemplating, adoring
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and praising his name, must clearly appear to be as serviceable, as they are fit. When it is considered that a devout and lively sense of GOD on the mind is the most effectual restraint upon all iniquity and vice; it is the dictate of wisdom and of virtuous zeal to use the most public methods of promoting and kindling a strong and general sense of the Deity. When it is considered, how much our sentiments are enlarged and improved, and our joys raised and heightened by society, public worship is on this account a wise and rational service; as it brings the advantages of society into religion, and by pouring the additional pleasures of sympathy into the heart, it enhances the glow and satisfactions of devotion. When it is remembered; that instructions and discourses on the interesting branches and motives of religious virtue are joined to the acts of adoration and praise; the public institutions of religion rise in use and importance; the House of GOD hereby becomes the school of religious virtue, and a seminary of wisdom to train us up in the noblest habits. In a word, when it is considered; that the public worship of the one GOD and Father of All, is a powerful cement of love and union amongst men; and that

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that by it the weighty truths of religion are made known and impressed, come to be declared and felt; how reasonable is it mutually to exhort each other and say, *Come ye; let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob: come let us serve the Lord in the beauty of holiness.*---Indeed on these principles, public worship has gained the approbation and countenance of all ages and nations. The wisest law-givers have used the aids thereof to support public virtue and happiness. From the earliest times, seasons have been appointed; days and hours devoted to the performance of sacred offices; altars have been raised and temples built. The law of Moses enacted various times and days, for the whole community to engage in religious duties. Our divine pattern regularly attended the services of the Jewish synagogue. The primitive Christians constantly assembled together on the first day of the week (which very early received the name of *the Lord's day*) for *fellowship, breaking of bread and prayer*: besides that, till the whole Jewish dispensation was abolished, they joined in the services and solemnities of the Jewish sabbaths and synagogues. Christianity has given a new sanction to public worship, by
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the appointment of baptism and the Lord's Supper to maintain the public profession of religion; and by the encouraging promise of our Saviour's gracious presence; *wherever two or three are gathered together in his name.* It goes further; it represents social devotion, as the spring of the transports, happy spirits enjoy in the regions of pure and immortal bliss.----Now after such a concurrence, such an harmony of proofs to illustrate the importance of assembling ourselves together; since it is plainly to be deduced from these considerations, that we are bound by every possible obligation to keep up with decency and decorum the solemn offices of public devotion; it may be justly asked, with surprize and resentment and grief in the language of the text; *Why is the House of GOD forsaken?* Why are its walls left empty and its services slighted?

I am sensible these words do not originally refer to the conduct of those, who absent themselves from the House of God; but to some abuses and neglects of another kind. That wise and pious reformer NEHEMIAH had discovered, that the portion and pay of the Levites and Singers, either through a remissness in collecting it, or
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through the baseness of the collectors, had been withheld from them : and that for want of due encouragement, they had fled every one to his field, and repaired to the cultivation of their estates, instead of working and serving in the House of God. *And I perceived (says he) that the portion of the Levites had not been given them : for the Levites and Singers that did the work, were fled every one to his field ; and then contended I with the Rulers and said : why is the House of GOD forsaken ?* Not only the sound of the words, but the occasion of the remonstrance, justify the application of them to any instance of conduct, which shows a contempt and neglect of the Deity. I am sorry that under the dispensation of the gospel, when the encouragements and motives to the offices of devotion, are so animating and urgent, that there should be any reason to contend, though with the spirit of meekness, and the force of argument with Christians, and to say, *Why is the House of GOD forsaken and slighted ?* But the many vacancies visible in our places of public worship, are too evident proofs of absence from, and indifference to the offices of devotion performed there : proofs that the obligations thereto
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are either weakly evaded, or else set aside by the force of stronger and juster reasons; on either supposition it is fit in a matter so important, fairly to hear, and candidly to debate it. Let the excuses for absence be alledged, and their weight be tried. They, who support religion by a serious and constant attendance on its public services, will be confirmed in their pious conduct: and possibly some, who seldom visit the House of God may be awakened to zeal, regularity and diligence in countenancing its solemnities by their presence. Let me ask then, *Why is the House of GOD forsaken?* And the pleas, by which an absence from it is defended, shall be produced and considered: and from hence will the improvement of the subject naturally arise.

First.---The case of some is: that in this they are entirely governed by *motives of a worldly nature, by the calls of profit or of pleasure.* The emergencies of business, and the hurry of their affairs through the week, they urge, leave them no time to post their accounts; or else some sudden call, some important matter arises, that will admit of no delay; and they are obliged to employ those hours in the warehouse, or counting-house;

house ; which should be filled up by an attendance at God's House. There are those, whose frequent absence is occasioned by associating with company, to whom the worship of God is a strange and irksome work ; and by forming parties of pleasure and entertainment, that will not bear the interruption of such serious work, as the instructions of religion and the offices of devotion. And those there are, who in violation of the laws of decency and their country, stay at home to keep open the houses of public resort, and to draw the intoxicating liquor for an idle, dissolute, and drunken race. Of this nature are the hindrances to the worship of God, business and pleasure produce.——It is an undeniable principle, that trade and pleasure are both in themselves lawful and innocent : but certainly they may be carried beyond the bounds of moderation and reason : certainly they are not our highest concerns ; and certainly they are not to be pursued to the neglect of piety and virtue, to the neglect of our best improvement, of God, and of public happiness : and yet thus criminal and dangerous is the pursuit of them ; when they leave us no time for the worship of God, and the care of the soul : when they so wholly engross

gross and delight our hearts, that we cannot spare from them that short portion of time ; reason and scripture both call on us to redeem from them, and to devote to divine and eternal interests. And let it be observed, that the interval of the LORD's day, religiously observed, so far from interfering with the demands of business and the views of pleasure, would really assist and advance both. For it would produce an agreeable change in the employment of our thoughts, affections and time : it would cause a rest from the cares and joys, which at the best fatigue and cloy : and it would give our return to them a new relish. But was it not so. It is a plea that will never stand the test of reason, or the tribunal of the great Judge ; *My own advantage caused me to neglect the honour of God : my own pleasure prevailed above the will of my heavenly Father. I was too deeply engaged, and too much amused with the things of time to mind the interests of eternity.* But why, say I, this plea will never bear us out before the Sovereign Judge ; whilst it has been dwelt upon, have you not felt its weakness ? Has not the mention excited inward confusion and shame ?

Secondly,

Secondly.---It is a pretence apparently more reasonable, and doubtless not so repugnant to piety; under which others take shelter. They alledge the distance of their dwellings from the House of God, the badness of the roads leading thither at some seasons of the year; or the want of health to go abroad, or the inclemency of the weather.---Now not to say that there are in almost every Christian society, even in the present low state of pious zeal, some (God be praised) who chearfully surmount many, if not a concurrence of these inconveniences, by their presence to keep up and enjoy the benefits of public worship: not to say that the sincerity of our love to God is more plainly evinced, and more strongly proved, by the difficulties we surmount to testify and express it: not to say, that the reality of these difficulties will be discerned and known by others; and will hereby render our example in a diligent and constant attendance on God's House, notwithstanding them, much more edifying and instructive: not to say, the more pains we are at to serve God, and glorify his name; more secure will be our title to his favour, and more great and distinguishing the degrees of our future reward and dignity.

nity. Not to insist on these things ; the force and merit of these excuses may be determined by this single and plain question, namely : whether the same cause would keep us at home, was the House of God a place for holding a market or fair, where we might traffick for gain, or partake of any public diversions ? or whether we in fact do not readily and often rise above these hindrances ; when profit or entertainment invite us to the places of buying or selling, and the houses of amusement and pleasure ? If so : this plea is as weak as the former, betrays a prevailing indifference to God, and discovers an inordinate attachment to this world.----Considered in the most favourable light, it is commonly the plea of indolence and sloth ; from which the awful awakening sanctions of religion should rouse us ; if the gratitude and love of our souls to the best of Beings is not ardent and lively enough to carry us superior to such slight inconveniences and sufferings, with which his service may be attended. Who of us would not be ashamed to urge this excuse ; if we recollected the trials of cruel mockings and scourgings, of the loss of goods, of bonds and of imprisonments, which through their zeal for God
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and his house, multitudes of worthy Confessors and Martyrs have endured? Yet this plea is often suffered to prevail to the neglect of the public institutions of religion: especially when, as is frequently the case, it is supported by the apology; by which others excuse their absence from the House of GOD, namely, in the

Third place——That by reading valuable discourses on the subjects of religious truth and practice, by the perusal of the scriptures, and by private prayer, they can fill up the seasons of public worship at home, even more to their edification and pleasure, than by an attendance on the social offices of devotion.----Doubtless the application of the mind to the services of piety and the study of the scriptures, and of religion, is both a rational and necessary employment of our thoughts and time: but to make these duties a plea for the omission of the more public duties of religion, justly raises some suspicions and fears, that even these are not attended to so seriously, so devoutly, as is pretended. For methinks the same principle of piety, the same desire of moral improvement, would urge them to go to the House of GOD, and carry them to the assemblies of his people. But let

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charity believe, that the time, by others consecrated to the public, is by them spent in the private worship of God: still the excuse is weak and the neglect is criminal. Hereby the promise of our divine master and friend to bless, by his gracious presence those, who meet together in his name, is treated with contempt; as if we had no sense of its value, or no faith in its accomplishment. One clear and important duty, a duty grounded on the plainest principles of reason, and supported by the sanction of GOD's word, is omitted and violated. *One* apt and proper, *one* prescribed and necessary means of preserving the life and vigour of religion in the soul, is with an unbecoming and dangerous indifference neglected. We absurdly exclude the happy and pleasing influence of society from religion: when we readily endeavour to promote the success of the schemes of business, and to heighten the joys of amusement, by making both public and social. They, who alledge this pretence consider not, that instructive, judicious and pathetic discourses, read by themselves in retirement, want *some advantages*; meaner discourses, (if not wholly trifling and uninteresting) may claim, when delivered from the pulpit. For, whereas
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the *former* enter only by the *eyes*; the latter more sensibly awaken, and command attention by striking upon the *ears*, whilst the sight of the speaker contributes to their force; if his manner is not particularly false and disgusting. They consider not that the warmth of devotion grows more ardent, by being mutual: and that they deprive themselves of that acceptance, with which GOD hearkens to the united prayers of the righteous. And, which is of main weight to expose the weakness and guilt of this plea, hereby they withhold their public testimony to the perfections and government of GOD: This is not confessing CHRIST before men; but neglecting the most natural and effectual means of perpetuating his name, and of supporting his cause. Our retired and solitary devotion may have its advantages and pleasures; but it cannot teach and affect *others*: when hid from the world, it cannot enlighten the world; and the beauties of holiness cannot attract imitation, when they are not exposed to view.----On the whole, it may be left to their own reason and conscience to decide; whether private devotion, though of excellent use can atone for the neglect of public. And such, who under this pre-

tence actually fill up the hours of public worship with vain conversation, unseasonable walking, sleep, business, or any thing, rather than prayer to their Maker : Such cannot forget the guilt, or not fear the effects of this vile hypocrisy ; or however *they* may forget it : let them not any longer be deceived ; GOD cannot be deceived, and will not be mocked !

Fourthly----The House of GOD is forsaken by others, because they imagine their knowledge is so clear and extensive, and their minds so well informed, that they can expect to hear nothing from the preacher, but what they are well acquainted with already.----However, this apology may flatter themselves, it favours but little of humility and candour : and it is totally insufficient to justify their conduct. For let it be granted, that it would be highly improper for the preacher to insist on those topics, which would appear new to them ; or to canvass religious matters so thoroughly, or to enter so deep into them, as would entertain and improve their exalted and refined minds : since prudence and charity oblige him to insist upon those plain and common subjects, that are level to the capacities of unlearned hearers ; yet there

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there is that weight, that importance, that universal moment in the common and plainest subjects of religious instructions, that always give them a claim to the serious regard of the most improved understandings. It will shew an amiable condescension, not to say a peculiar happiness of mind, to seek improvement from discourses beneath their judgment and taste. There is a great and material difference between the knowledge of the head, and the goodness of the heart : and notorious defects in the latter, often meet together with high attainments in the former. And the public institutions of religion, though they might not advance that, would much tend to cure and remove these. It must not be forgotten, nor can it be denied ; that as to the truths we are fully acquainted with, they are too apt to slip from our memories : and amidst a variety of worldly cares and delights, the impressions too easily die away from the mind. Though we cannot therefore be informed, we need to be put in remembrance of them : though we are established in the knowledge of them, it is highly necessary to recollect them : and to be reminded and admonished of those things we do know, will revive our sense of them,

and give them new force and strength, new life and power.---Look, Sirs ! to JESUS CHRIST, the wisdom of GOD, and the glorious image of his purity and goodness. Did he consider his exalted views, his eminent holiness, as setting aside the obligations and usefulness of public worship. No ! you are very sensible, that while the night was frequently consecrated by him to private devotion ; he always attended the services of the temple and synagogue, that he might do the will of his Father, and be an example to us. He has thus taught the wisest and best of us to put a great value upon the solemnities of GOD's House. He has taught us to follow his steps, by leaving an example of humility, obedience and zeal in this respect, that may instruct and edify others.----Here, (our own improvement in knowledge and holiness set aside) *here* is one great motive, one undeniable obligation to the offices of social devotion ; namely, that hereby we countenance religion, and appear *publickly* for GOD and virtue. It is a duty we owe *to GOD*, to use every method of preserving the belief, and the lively apprehension of his good and venerable, of his kind and universal government in the earth. It is a duty we owe *to*
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man, to promote and encourage by our own practice an attendance upon the instrumental duties of religion ; which are so expedient, so necessary for the instruction and improvement of the generality, and which actually are of considerable use to a part of them : a duty, to which our superior wisdom adds a peculiar obligation ; for that will give our example weight, and render it more striking and efficacious.---But to dismiss this plea : it should be observed and remembered ; it entirely leaves out and loses sight of *one principal part* of the employment and services of God's House, namely, *the exercises of devotion*. We assemble together to worship the Almighty, as well as to be instructed : we meet together not only to learn his will, but to adore his perfections, to celebrate his goodness, and to implore his benediction on ourselves, our friends, our country, and on mankind. This is an excellent service : this opens a source of continual improvement and joy : this resembles the employment of angels, and will constitute our noblest business in the world of perfection and bliss. By this we make mention of the loving-kindness of God, and advance his honour and glory. On the whole, it may be replied to this excuse

cuse, in the words of a sensible writer.
 " That man who thinks himself too wise
 " to be taught, gives so much evidence
 " against himself, and proves that he is not
 " so. And he who thinks himself above
 " the ordinary means of religion, has
 " never felt its proper influence on his
 " heart. Conversing with God is an em-
 " ployment, in which a good man will al-
 " ways find satisfaction and improve-
 " ment." *

Such are the pleas by which men defend and justify an absence from the House of God.---There is an excuse rather different from those we have mentioned, but frequently improved into an occasion of strengthening the two last pleas : it is derived from the case of those, who are so situated, that the immoralities of the preacher, or the errors and absurdities mingled with the public devotions, are great obstacles to their attendance on them. But this argument must loose in general much of its force : when it is considered, that in all parts of our country, numerous places of public worship are opened not only by the connivance, but by *the authority* of government : where none officiate as Ministers,

* Webb's Sermons, V. II. P. 178.

ters, but who are appointed thereto by the voluntary choice of the people : and where the *devotions not being restrained and directed by human laws,* * room is left for continual improvements and corrections, and liberty to conduct them on the principles of reason and the gospel. These are material advantages ; and very favourable to the pleasures and efficacy of public worship. *Advantages* to be chearfully embraced, though at some expence and inconvenience by them : who are so far directed by reason and conscience, as to prefer the honour of the Deity, the purity of his worship, and their own best improvement to ease, and the love of money.

What weight and strength there is in any of these pleas ; let it be left to every candid and honest mind to determine.---Not but they admonish the *ministers* of religion to use every method pious zeal can suggest, and wisdom dictate, to render the public devotions rational, solemn and fervent ; and their public instructions judicious and affecting : that they who forsake the House
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* The Author scarcely needs to observe, that he refers to the case of PROTESTANT DISSENTERS ; whose principles are thus favourable to the knowledge and influence of true religion.

of God, may be invited to it by the clear prospects of profit and delight ; and may be allured by the beauties and decencies of holiness.——Not but they admonish *all*, who conscientiously assemble together to support the ordinances of religion, to recommend them by their grave and composed behaviour in the performance, and by the visible effects of them in the purity and goodness of their tempers and lives : that the benefits and decorum, the reasonableness and advantages of public worship, may be seen, admired and felt.

Though after all we can do for its support and efficacy : this indifference to the House of God and its duties, is a malady of too malignant a nature to be so cured. The apologies that have been now introduced and considered, there is too much reason to suspect, are mere pretences ; under which the real cause is concealed. Give me leave to mention it, and to charge it on the conscience plainly. *Men are indifferent to religion* : they are little concerned about the favour of God, and the happiness of the other world : therefore is the House of God forsaken. There is in the heart an inward settled indisposition, to the serious offices of devotion : therefore are pleas framed,

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framed, and every idle excuse is caught at, by which they may appear to defend their absence from them. Hence, when they do come to the **House of God**, whatever tends to awaken, disgusts them. Their light and airy behaviour during prayer, shows that the worship of **God** is far from their thoughts: and the easy manner, in which they purposely set themselves to sleep under the sermon, shows, that they do not care to know the branches, or to feel the obligations of religious virtue. No wonder also, when they are conscious to no holy relish for the duties of devotion, and to no strong sense of eternal things: that they can easily satisfy themselves in a partial attendance on the **House of God**. The morning or afternoon's service on the **LORD's** day, is frequently to give way to convenience, profit or pleasure: not to mention the *total neglect* of it on other days. *Six days* in the week shall be devoted to the calls of business and amusement, and scarcely *one day* can be allowed for those solemn services, in which it is our privilege and honour religiously to engage; it is to be righteous over-much, thus to employ *the whole* of this day.——To his own master and
judge

judge doth every man stand and fall : far be it from a Christian and a preacher, rashly to pass sentence on any one ! but certainly, if we were even half as eager about the services of God, and the concerns of a future eternal state ; as we are fondly busy about the things of this life ; we should not allow ourselves to be so often and easily missing from the House of God.

——If there is a God who will reward them, that diligently seek him.——If the offices of a Mediator, through whom we are to present our addresses to the Almighty, and the ordinances of worship, are the appointments of God : ——And if there is an eternal sabbath, a perfect and immortal rest reserved for the people of God : ——If these things are so ; we shall doubtless entertain very different thoughts of our absence from God's House *hereafter* : to what we *now* admit.

In a word, let us not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of too many is, but let us exhort one another to go up to the House of God : and so much the more, as ye see the *eternal day* approaching. So prepare your minds for the discoveries of the regions of knowledge

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ledge and truth : and so learn the notes of angels, till you shall at length fall in with their songs, and join the choir of exalted and glorified spirits. *Amen.*

F I N I S.





ISOCRATES'S *Oration to* DEMONICUS :

Translated from the GREEK.



THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF KING

CHARLES THE FIRST

BY JOHN BURNET

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To the R E A D E R.

THE following translation is subjoined to these discourses, because it falls in with the design of their publication, that of instilling into the minds of youth, the sentiments of wisdom and virtue.—It is inscribed to a young gentleman of rank and fortune : who, it is probable, lived under the government of Evagoras, King of Cyprus.—Isocrates the author, was a citizen of Athens, and the most celebrated rhetorician of his age. He was born about the 8th Olympiad, and 436 years before CHRIST. The weakness of his voice, and his almost unsurmountable timidity, prevented his appearing in public. This induced him to open a school for the instruction of youth in eloquence : which was a fruitful nursery of great men. However he did not entirely renounce the care of public affairs ; and as others served their country *vivâ voce* in the public assemblies, Isocrates contributed to its welfare by his writings, and these being soon made public, were eagerly sought

To the R E A D E R.

sought after. Upon the news of the defeat of the Athenians, by Philip, at the battle of Chæroneia ; he could not survive the misfortune of his country, and died of grief, after having continued four days without eating. He was then fourscore and eighteen, or an hundred years old.---His discourses had no other tendency but to inspire states, princes, and even private persons with sentiments of probity, honour, fidelity, moderation, justice, love of the public good, zeal for the preservation of liberty, and respect for the sanctity of oaths, the faith of treaties, and for all that relates in any manner to religion.---The annexed sententious piece abounds with just remarks, and fine thoughts.

See Rollin's Antient History, V. IV. P. 289, and 328, 8vo. edition ; and his History of the Arts and Sciences of the antients, V. III. P. 128--133, 8vo. And Argumentum a Wolfio.



ISOCRATES'S *Oration to* DEMONICUS.

IN many instances, Demonicus, we discover a great contrariety in the sentiments of the good, and the opinions of the wicked. The greatest difference is discernible in their mutual intimacies. *These* treat their friends with respect only when they are present : *those* maintain an affection for theirs, when at a distance from them. A short period will dissolve the intimacies of the wicked : but eternity cannot destroy the friendship of the good.

As in my apprehension, the candidates for glory and lovers of learning, ought to imitate the good, but not the wicked ; I have addressed this discourse to you, a testimony of the friendship between us, and a memorial of my intimacy with Hipponicus. For it is proper that the friends, as well as estate of a father, should be entailed on the son. Fortune smiles upon my design, and the present opportunity concurs with me ; for you desire instruction, it is my province to instruct others : you apply
to

ISOCRATES'S ORATION

to the study of philosophy ; and I assist the enquirers after it.

They who compose pleadings * for their friends, are engaged in a good work : but are not employed in the most excellent branch of philosophy. They who direct youth, not how to exercise their powers in oratory, but how they may form virtuous habits, these render their disciples a more material service ; in as much as the former lead only to eloquence, but the latter regulate the conduct. Therefore it is not our design to address you in a persuasive harangue ; but to lay before you the precepts of wisdom. We would point out what pursuits should engage youth ; from what actions they should abstain ; with whom they should converse ; and what plan of life they should follow.

For they only, who walk according to these rules of life, can attain to genuine virtue : than which, no possession is more valuable or permanent. Beauty is destroyed by age, and impaired by sickness. Riches minister rather to vice than goodness, alluring
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* It was a general custom in those times, for persons skilled in oratory, to compose pleadings for such as had occasion for them.

TO DEMONICUS.

ing youth to sensual indulgences. Strength under the conduct of prudence, is advantageous ; but without it, is injurious to the possessors. If exercised, it is an ornament to the body : but it obscures the faculties of the mind. Virtue is the sole possession, that accompanies in old age, those, in whose minds it hath, without stain, been progressive with their years. It is more valuable than riches, and more useful than nobility of birth. It makes those attainments easy, that to others are impossible ; and supports with fortitude the circumstances, that terrify the multitude. It regards inactivity as a reproach ; but self-exertion as an honour.—We see this in the labours of Hercules, and the actions of Theseus ; whose virtuous manners have enstamped on their actions such marks of glory : that time will not be able to sink their deeds into oblivion.

Not but that the recollection of your father's conduct, will furnish you from your own family, with a fine model of my precepts. For he did not spend his life negligent of virtue, or indulging to sloth. But he exercised his body with labours : and his soul was inured to difficulties. He was free from the excessive love of riches,
and

ISOCRATES'S ORATION

and enjoyed present things as one liable to death ; but managed his fortune with as much œconomy, as if he was immortal. Neither did he live in a mean and niggardly manner : but was elegant, magnificent, and liberal to his friends. Among whom he numbered rather those, who bore an affection for him ; than those allied by family. For he thought that a good temper was a firmer bond of intimacy than laws ; and a similitude of manners than family : and choice than necessity. The time would fail me, was I to reckon up all his actions : on other occasions we shall exhibit a more accurate view of them.

We have now offered only a specimen of Hyponicus's disposition ; as a model, according to which you ought to live ; regarding his conduct as a law, and becoming both the imitator and rival of your father's virtues. It is a shame, that painters should draw beautiful animals ; and yet children not imitate their virtuous ancestors. Let it be a principle with you, that a wrestler ought not more vigorously to strive with his antagonist, than you should vie with your father in his pursuits. But it is impossible the mind should be thus affected, unless it is fraught with many good lessons.

TO DEMONICUS.

lessons. Moderate labours add strength to the body : good studies increase the vigour of the soul. Therefore I will endeavour to show you concisely, by what pursuits you will, in my judgment, make the greatest advancement in virtue : and conciliate the favour of all men.

In the first place, reverence the Gods : express this not only by sacrifices, but by a religious observance of oaths : for that is a mark of wealth : this a proof of integrity of manners.---Worship the Deity always, but especially in the public solemnities of religion : for thus you will at once shew, that you sacrifice to the Gods, and obey the laws.-----Behave to your parents, as you would wish your children should behave to you.-----Use rather the bodily exercises that conduce to health, than to strength : you will secure this end, if you desist from exercise, whilst you have sufficient vigour to follow it.-----What things it is a shame to practice ; reckon inconsistent with goodness to mention.-----Shew no approbation of the horse-laugh, nor countenance the bold talker : the former is foolish, the latter betrays a want of sense.—Accustom yourself to look composed, but not austere : by this you
will

ISOCRATES'S ORATION

will appear to be proud ; but by that to be wise.——Be assured a decorum of behaviour, modesty, integrity, and temperance, are the best ornaments. For in all these things does the discipline of youthful years consist.——If you have been guilty of a base action, never expect to conceal it : and if you should conceal it from others, you will be conscious to it yourself.——Fear the Deity.——Honour your parents.——Treat your friends with respect.——Obey the laws, follow the pleasures that are of good report. Pleasure joined with virtue, is eligible : without it, is despicable.——Be afraid of malicious slanders, though they should be false ; for the generality are ignorant of the truth ; but pay a great difference to common fame.——Do every thing, as one who does not wish to be concealed from any man : for though you should hide any action for a time, you will afterwards be detected.——You will effectually secure esteem, if it appears that you never practise yourself, the things you would reprove in others.——If you love learning, you will make a great proficiency in it. Preserve by exercise, the knowledge you have attained ; and add to it new branches of science you have not yet learnt.

For

TO DEMONICUS.

For it is as much unbecoming not to imbibe the useful instructions we have heard ; as not to receive the valuable offers of a friend.--Spend the leisure of life in a cheerful attendance on the precepts of wisdom. So you will attain with ease, to the knowledge of what others discover with difficulty. Let it be a maxim with you, that many lectures of virtue far surpass great wealth : the latter will soon fail us : the former will endure for ever. Wisdom alone of all our possessions is immortal.——Grudge not the pains of a long journey, to attend the professors of useful knowledge. It is a shame, when merchants pass over such great seas to advance their fortunes, that youth should refuse travelling by land for the improvement of their minds.

Let your deportment be affable, and your address courteous. It is one instance of affability, to accost those we meet ; and of courteousness, to use benevolent expressions.---Treat all with kindness, but form intimacies with the worthiest : thus you will not be indifferent to the former ; and will win the love of the latter.---Avoid too frequent conversations with the same persons, and too long on the same subjects : for every thing may be carried to excess.--

Inure

ISOCRATES'S ORATION

Inure yourself to voluntary labours, that you may be able to support those that are unavoidable.

Exercise a perfect command over those things, where the soul will be disgraced by a subjection : such are gain, wrath, pleasure, and grief.--You will be superior to the first ; if you esteem as the truest gain ; not what will make an accession to your wealth, but what will advance your reputation.—To anger : if you behave towards them that offend you, as you would think it reasonable others should treat your faults. To sensual gratifications, if it is a maxim with you : that it is ignominious to be a master of servants, but a slave to pleasure.—To grief : if you consider the calamities of others : and remember that you are a man.

Keep what is communicated to you in the confidence of conversation, with more exact fidelity than the money entrusted to your care. The life of a good man ought to command more credit than an oath. Reckon it no less fit to distrust the wicked, than to confide in the good.—Divulge secrets to none : unless they who hear them, and you who speak of them, are under equal obligatious to conceal them.

On

TO DEMONICUS.

On two occasions, if it is demanded, take an oath : either to clear yourself from foul accusations, or to rescue a friend from danger. Appeal to no deity on the account of gain, though you can do it with a safe conscience ; for to some you will appear to be a perjured, to others an avaricious man.

Admit no man into the number of your friends, before you have enquired how he treated his former friends : for you may expect, that as he behaved to them, so he will to you. Commence a friend slowly ; having professed yourself one, endeavour to continue so. It is equally a reflection to have no friend, and often to change our acquaintance. Form no intimacies without a previous trial : but let the trial be made without running any hazard : this you may do, if you pretend to be in want when you are not : and if you communicate common matters with the air of secrecy. Should the experiment prove unsuccessful, you will suffer no inconvenience : if it should answer, you will be let into the knowledge of your friends temper. Prove the pretensions of friendship, by the calamities of life, and a joint participation of the same dangers. For gold is tried in the
fire,

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fire, and by adversity we discover our friends.—You will treat your friends in the kindest manner, if you do not wait for their application : but voluntarily offer your assistance in season. Think it equally disgraceful to be surpassed in kindness by a friend : as to be subdued by the evil actions of an enemy.—Value not only the friends who sympathize ^{with} your misfortunes, but those who envy not your prosperity. For many will grieve with their acquaintance in their distresses, but look with an evil eye on their success—Speak to those you are in company with, respectfully of your absent friends, that it may appear you do not slight them in their absence.

In your dress be neat and elegant ; but not over-curious : there is a kind of magnificence in the former ; but the latter is superfluous.—Wish not for a large share, but a moderate enjoyment of the good things of this life. Despise them who are eager in the pursuit of riches, without being able to use their acquisitions ; they are like a man who should purchase a fine horse, but knows not how to ride. Let your wealth and possessions be turned to some good account. Wealth answers its end, when men know how to enjoy it with satisfaction,

TO DEMONICUS.

satisfaction, and possessions, when they are improved to good purposes. For two reasons, put a value on your fortune : both as it enables you to assist a friend under any emergencies, and to answer the demands of government and the laws. As for the other occasions of life, love nothing to an excessive degree, and life itself but moderately. Be content with your allotment in present things, and seek better.

Reproach no one with his misfortunes : for fortune is common, and the future is uncertain.—Perform benevolent services for the good. A title to the gratitude of a good man, is an excellent treasure. He who does kind offices for a man of a bad mind, must expect a return similar to what he receives, who feeds a strange dog ; this will bark at them who throw him meat, as well as at any he meets : men of bad principles will as soon injure their benefactors, as their enemies.—Abhor the flatterer and the hypocrite, for both will repay the confidence reposed in them with treachery. If you make them your friends who countenance your vices, you will never find any that will incur your displeasure, by exhorting you to virtue.

Let

ISOCRATES'S ORATION

Let your carriage to your domesticks be courteous, and not haughty: even servants can scarcely bear the swellings of pride: a courteous carriage sweetly wins upon all. You will be formed to a courteousness of manners, if you avoid contentions; do not indulge to a spirit of contradiction about trifles: nor hastily resort upon your domesticks in their angry fits, though their resentments are without sufficient cause: but gently yield to them, and defer your rebukes till they are cool.—Be not on ludicrous occasions grave: nor make a jest of serious affairs: for whatever is unseasonable, is always disgusting.——Bestow not your favours reluctantly; as many do, who though they perform good offices, give their assistance with an ill grace.—Be not fond of passing censures: for it is offensive: be not ready to reprove; for it irritates.

Be particularly cautious of joining in public entertainments; but when it so happens that you are a party in any; leave the company before you are betrayed into excess; for the mind intoxicated with wine, is exposed to the same dangers with a chariot that has lost its rider: this without a guide, is hurried away at random: the mind,

TO DEMONICUS.

mind, when reason is dethroned, is betrayed into many follies.

Regard immortal things, for this is true magnanimity : and as mortal, to enjoy the present state with moderation.

Learn to estimate the superiority of knowledge above ignorance from hence ; than men reap some advantages from other instances of folly : but this is attended with a great detriment ; for the uninstructed often draw on themselves punishment by deeds from him, they offend by their speeches.

Would you win over any man to become your friend : pass some encomium on him, to those who will report it again. For praise is the beginning of friendship, and censure of enmity.

In your deliberations make the past a rule of judging about future events. For what is obscure, will be more easily discerned by comparing it with what is clear. Deliberate slowly, but execute every proper measure with speed. Regard success as the best gift from the Gods, and wise schemes as the best fruit of your own thoughts. On some points, you may not choose to speak plainly ; and yet wish to have the advice of your friends : communicate them as the

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affairs

ISOCRATES'S ORATION

affairs of another person ; hereby you will learn their sentiments, and conceal your own concern therein.—When you are about to advise with another on your affairs, observe first how he manages his own business : for he who is unskilful in his own concerns, can never give good directions about another's.—You will be induced to seek advice, if you view the misfortunes that flow from rashness. For we take greater care of our health, after we have felt the painful inconveniencies of sickness.

Imitate the manners of your sovereign, and follow his studies : thus you will appear to approve and rival them. You will draw on yourself the favour of the people, and strengthen their affection towards you. Obey the laws ordained by the king ; but esteem his conduct as the most binding law. For as he who resides in a democracy, should pay his court to the people : so he who lives under a monarchy, should honour the king.

If you are appointed to any office in the state, be careful not to choose a bad man for your deputy ; for the blame of his crimes will lie on yourself. Leave the public posts not with an advanced fortune,
but

TO DEMONICUS.

but with an increase of glory. For the praise of the people is the best riches.

Neither assist, nor patronize any wicked actions. The wickedness you encourage, you will appear to perpetrate. Aim at an ability for compassing schemes of ambition and gain : but be content to live on an equal rank with others ; that it may be clear, you practise what is right, not through inability, but from a rectitude of heart.——Prefer honest poverty to wealth with iniquity : rectitude is superior to riches : the advantages of one are limited to life : but the other entails glory on the dead. The former are shared by the wicked ; but they cannot be our partners here. Imitate none who become rich by unrighteous gains : but highly value them who are losers on account of their integrity. The upright, if they have the advantage of the wicked in nothing else, have certainly the better of them in the excellency of their hopes.

Let every thing that relates to life, engage your attention, but particularly cultivate the understanding. A virtuous mind in an human body, is the noblest treasure in the meanest repository. Accustom the body to labour, and inure the soul to the study

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study of wisdom : that the former may have strength to perform every thing necessary ; and the latter may be endowed with discernment, to discover what is fitting.—What you are about to speak, revolve first in the mind : with many, the tongue runs before the thoughts.—Remember that nothing human is permanent ; thus you will not be elated in prosperity, nor depressed in adversity.—In two cases be free to enter on conversation : * when you have particularly considered the subject, or are under any necessity to speak to it. In these circumstances alone, to speak, is better than silence : in other circumstances, it is better to be silent, than to speak.—Under pleasing occurrences rejoice ; under painful events let your grief be moderate. In both situations, behave with reserve before others. It is absurd to secret our wealth at home ; and to expose the inward feelings of our minds abroad.—Fear disgrace more than dangers. Let death be terrible to the wicked ; but an ignominious life to the good.

* A very sensible saying of Isocrates is related : he was at table with Nicocreon, King of Cyprus, and was pressed to talk and supply matter for conversation. He persisted in excusing himself, and gave this reason for his refusal, “ What I do know, does not suit this place : “ and what would suit it, I don't know.”

TO DEMONICUS.

good.———Prefer a life spent in the security of peace : but if you are called to the perils of war, let it be your ambition to return from the field with glory, but purchase not your safety with dishonour. To die, is the lot of humanity ; to die well, is granted only to the worthy.

Let it not surprize you, that many of these precepts do not suit your present age ; neither did this escape me. It was my design in the same work, to offer you some directions for your present conduct, and to leave with you rules for future life. You will easily discern their usefulness : but will with difficulty find one, to give you disinterested advice. That you might not be obliged to make your application to others, I thought it best to omit nothing, by which I might direct you.———I shall be very thankful to God, if I am not deceived in the good opinion I have entertained of you. I find, that as the generality of mankind are more fond of pleasant than of wholesome food ; so they more readily associate with them, who will be partakers with their vices ; than with those who admonish them. But I flatter myself, that you entertain other sentiments : and I ground my opinion on your diligent application

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cation to study. For it is probable, that he, who in compliance with the dictates of his own mind, practices what is best, will highly value others that call him to virtue.

—— It will warm you to the love of good actions, if you observe, that from them flow the most genuine pleasures. The satisfactions of sloth and luxury, are quickly and closely followed with pain and sorrow : but the delights that proceed from virtuous labours, and a life of sobriety, are always sincere and lasting. *There* we are first conscious to joy, then to grief : but *here* grief is succeeded by pleasure.

In all actions, we are not so apt to remember the beginning, as to be affected with the end. Most of the things relative to life, are pursued not for their own sake, but with a concern for their consequences. Consider, it is admitted, the wicked may consistently do any thing : for this is the principle they set out upon : but as for the good, they cannot neglect virtue without universal censure. None hate the vicious so much, as they do *those*, who, assuming the profession of virtue, differ nothing from the multitude. And with reason. For if we condemn those who deceive us in words,

TO DEMONICUS.

words, may we not be allowed to denominate them worthless, who in their whole conduct degrade themselves. We justly regard such, not only as offenders against themselves, but traitors to fortune. She has bestowed on them possessions, reputation and friends : but they render themselves unworthy of their present felicity.

If man may be allowed to guess at the sentiments of the Gods, I think the condition of their nearest connections shows in what manner they are affected towards the wicked and good.—For Jupiter, (as our authors record, and all believe) having begot Hercules and Tantalus, recompenced the virtues of the former with immortality : and punished the vices of the latter with the severest penalties.

You should be admonished by these examples, to follow after goodness and probity : and not only to adhere to the maxims we have advanced, but to read the best sentiments of the poets, and to peruse the useful works of other sensible authors.

For as we see the bee alighting on every flower, and collecting its sweets from each, so it becomes the lovers of wisdom to neglect no author, but to gather useful hints from

ISOCRATES'S ORATION, &c.

from every quarter. For the greatest diligence will be scarcely sufficient to subdue the evil propensities of nature.

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